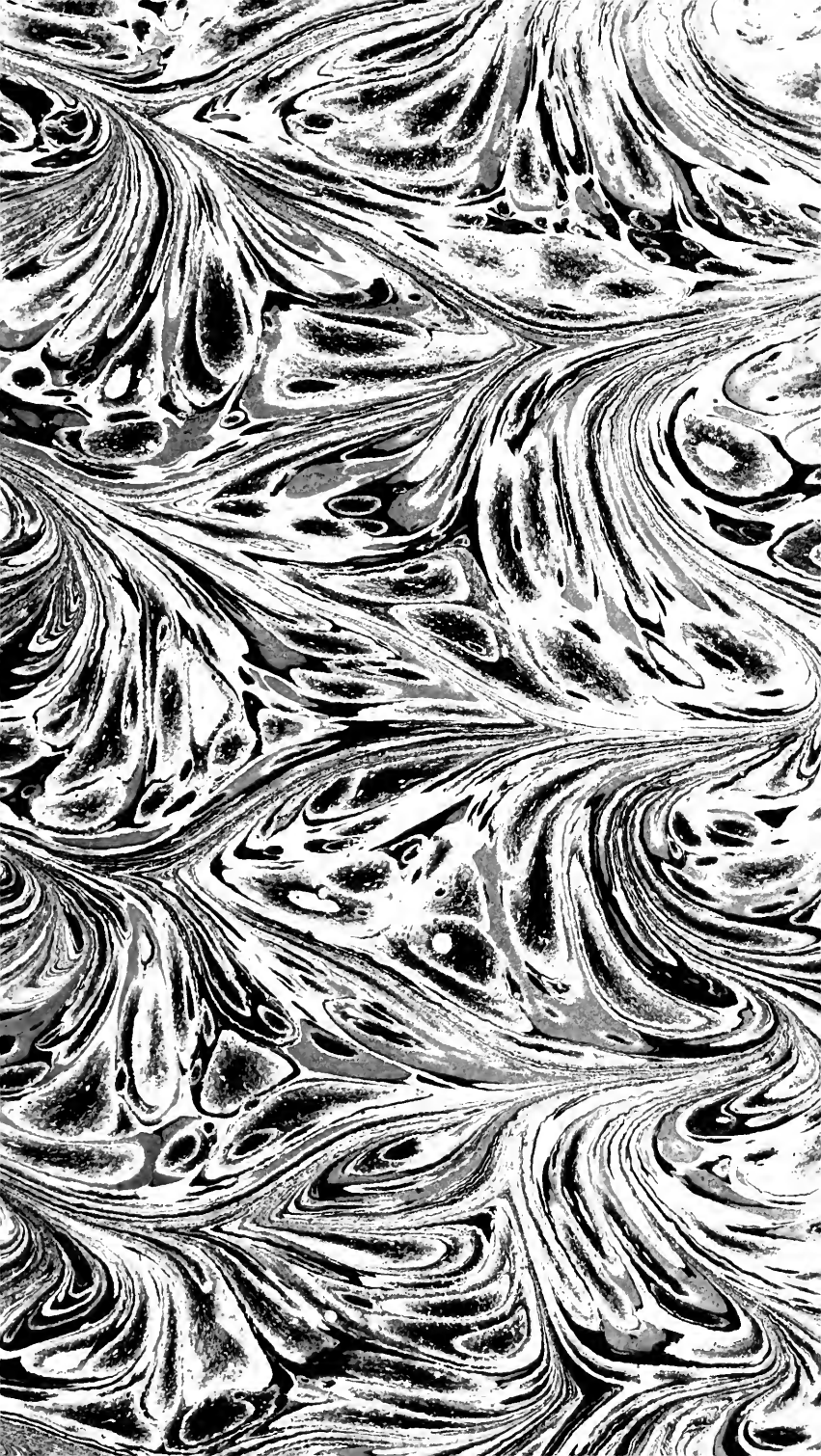


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Religious liberty stated and
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J. Martin Connell.

1850.

RELIGIOUS LIBERTY
STATED AND ENFORCED
ON THE PRINCIPLES
OF
SCRIPTURE AND COMMON SENSE.
IN SIX ESSAYS;

INCLUDING
AN HISTORIC ACCOUNT OF THE RISE AND PROGRESS
OF INTOLERANCE AND PERSECUTION;
WITH NOTES AND AN APPENDIX.

BY THOMAS WILLIAMS.

SECOND EDITION.

TO WHICH IS NOW ADDED,
AN ESSAY ON THE DUTY AND IMPORTANCE OF FREE COMMU-
NION AMONG CHRISTIANS OF EVERY DENOMINATION.

“ Hold fast the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free.”—Gal. v. 1.

LONDON:
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ESSAY ON Free Communion among Real Christians of every
Denomination, especially in the Present Period ; with
some Notices of the Writings of Messrs. Booth, Fuller,
and R. Hall, on this Subject.



RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

STATED AND ENFORCED,

&c.



OF all the doctrines of Christianity, *Religious Liberty*, though one of the most important, has been one of the last to be understood and acted upon. For more than fifteen hundred years, it was a *heresy*, abhorred by all sects and parties. The Catholic Church (so called) has never acknowledged it, nor can she, consistently with her own safety; for Religious Liberty produces free enquiry, and free enquiry is admitted, on all hands, to be fatal to the Roman Catholic religion.

The Reformers dissented from almost every principle of the church of Rome, but this — the right of persecution: and though Luther and some others thought it rather too much to *burn* heretics, all agreed that they should be restrained and punished; and, in short, that it was better to burn than to tolerate them. The church of England has burnt Protestants for heresy, and Papists for treason. The church of Scotland and the London ministers, in the Interregnum, declared their “utter detestation and abhorrence

of the *error of toleration*, patronizing and promoting all other errors, heresies, and blasphemies, whatever, under the abused name of Liberty of Conscience*." In fine, all sects and parties, who have claimed Religious Liberty for themselves, have no less earnestly refused it to their antagonists.

That *creatures ought to serve their CREATOR*, is a principle self-evident and incontrovertible; and if they do, it must be according to the light afforded them, from whatever source that may be derived. This obligation creates a *right*; for, surely, every man has a right to perform his duty to God, and to deny this, is to dispute the divine authority. To worship God, is the first of moral duties; and there is no power upon earth that can invalidate or supercede it.

But, admitting that man *ought to worship God*, and that he ought to worship him *according to the light afforded*, — I thence infer his right to *Religious Liberty*; or, in the strong language lately employed by a certain popular Society, that "every man, in every age, and in every country," has "a sacred, unalienable right to worship God according to his conscience," which "no individuals, or governments, or legislatures, can, without injustice and oppression, directly or indirectly infringe †:" — a principle which has recently been admitted by the highest

* These facts will be substantiated by authorities in the last Essay.

† Protestant Society, for the Protection of Religious Liberty. — See Evan. Mag. 1815, p. 512.

names in this country, both civil and ecclesiastical* ; but it can derive no authority from them : it is from Heaven.

Here I am sensible of having arrived beyond the limits of *Toleration*. To that term, indeed, I have strong objections, which I shall now take the liberty to enumerate.

1. *Toleration* implies something wrong, or at least doubtful, in the case †. We tolerate evils which we cannot wholly prevent ; but no man thinks of tolerating virtues, or unquestionable rights. I conceive it, therefore, equally improper to speak of *tolerating* the worship of God, as it would be to talk of tolerating obedience to the king, or to the laws.

2. *Toleration* also implies a right to forbid, which here I can by no means grant. Shall servants tolerate each other to obey their master ? The idea is perfectly ridiculous ; but when creatures talk of tolerating one another to obey their Maker, it is not only ridiculous, but profane ! Farther,

3. The term *Toleration* seems, in this case, to apply to both parties. To tolerate our fellow-

* See Parliamentary Debates, vol. xx, p. 242, &c.

† “ *Toleration*, allowance given to that which is not approved.”—*Johnson's Dictionary*.

In the Debates on Lord Sidmouth's Bill, 1811, Earl *Stanhope* said, He hated the word *toleration* ; it was a beggarly, narrow, worthless word : it did not go far enough : he hated toleration because he loved *liberty*.—*Parliament. Debates*, vol. xx, p. 250.

Mr. *W. Smith* said, — “ All the evils of which we had to complain arose from the absurd notions of toleration and indulgence. He abhorred such terms. He knew of nothing but Religious Liberty, which was the right inherent in every man to worship God in his own mode — *Ibid.* 418.

servant to obey, is to tolerate our master to receive obedience; and the higher this is carried, the more ridiculous it appears: hence a *Toleration Act* might properly be entitled, “An Act to *per-*
mit Almighty God to receive the Worship of his Creatures!”

So much for toleration; but what is *persecution*? This I take to be ‘the interruption or annoyance of any persons in their attempts to serve God, according to their conscience, either in public or in private:’ or, ‘the inflicting upon any person pains, penalties, or disabilities, ridicule or reproach, *merely* on account of their religion,—their worship not interfering with the worship of others, and their avowed principles not being inconsistent with the safety of the state.’ I add these provisions and restrictions, because I can easily conceive of circumstances in which they may be necessary*.

For instance, if a Popish priest, in his canonicals, were to enter one of our churches, and attempt to say *mass*, I should consider him, not as exercising his own right, but as infringing ours. In like manner, if a Quaker were to come into a Protestant chapel, like some of their first zealots, and, under a supposed influence of the Spirit,

* “The Protestant doctrine on this head, so far as Protestants are consistent with themselves, seems plainly to be this: — ‘That none are to be subjected to any kind or degree of civil penalties, merely on account of their religious opinion, or from any practices arising from them, if those practices be not detrimental to the peace of society, which the magistrate, by his office, stands engaged to preserve.’ *Doddridge’s Works*, (Leeds ed.) vol.iii, p.123.

address the minister or people, during their religious worship, he would deserve severe rebuke. ‘Keep to thine own meeting, friend,’ I would say, ‘and let us enjoy the same privileges that we allow to you.’

Reproach and ridicule, notwithstanding a wise and good man should be above regarding them, are, in some cases, acts of persecution, though of a private nature, and ought to be discountenanced. A Papist, or a Turk, however we may despise the mummerly of his forms, or the absurdity of his creed, is certainly an object of respect *while* engaged in the worship of his Maker, and ought by no means to be interrupted; for every kind and degree of persecution for conscience-sake, whether public or private, by a government or an individual, is certainly unlawful and anti-christian †.

† I am aware of the conduct of Elijah, who mocked the priests of Baal (1 Kings xviii.); but it is to be recollected that Elijah was a prophet in the highest sense, and accredited by the power of working miracles; moreover, that he lived under the Mosaic dispensation, which was a Theocracy, as will be shewn in my fourth Essay.

It should also be remarked, that when the disciples of our Lord, knowing him to possess miraculous powers, wished him to empower them to imitate the prophet, in calling fire from Heaven, to consume certain inhospitable Samaritans, our Lord reproved them, as neither understanding the spirit by which they were actuated, nor the nature of the Christian dispensation. “He turned and rebuked them, and said, ‘Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of; for the Son of man is not come to destroy men’s lives, but to save them.’” Luke ix. 55, 56.

ESSAY I.

*On the Principles in which the Christian Church
is founded.*

“When our blessed Saviour came to establish his religion in the world, he gave a law suitable to his nature, as he is Prince of Peace; a law of mildness and gentleness, of submission and forbearance towards one another.”—*Care's Prim. Christ.* Part iii, ch. 3.

JESUS CHRIST has founded his religion in the principles of benevolence and love. “A new commandment,” said he “give I unto you, that ye love one another*.” The terms *old* and *new* are, I think, used in the Scriptures, in a manner somewhat peculiar. *Old* is applied to what is aged, decaying, growing obsolete,—so it is applied to the old covenant,—the old testament dispensation: *new* to the Christian covenant or dispensation; not that it is *absolutely* new (for it is “of old, from everlasting†”); but because it has superceded the former, and can itself never decay, or be superceded by another. “In that he saith a *new* covenant, he hath made the first old; now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away‡.” So this commandment is *not absolutely* new, as though it had never before been heard of (for it is as old as the moral law); but because it is incapable of decay, and

* John xiii. 34. † Jer. xxxi. 4. ‡ Heb. viii. 13.

cannot grow obsolete. It is the precept whereon the church is founded, and the criterion by which it must be known: — “By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, that ye love one another*.” And never can this principle be superceded. It shall be in force, not only to the end of time, but shall run parallel with eternity. “Now abide these three, — Faith, Hope, and Charity; but the greatest of these is Charity †.”

Our LORD particularly guarded his disciples against dissensions, divisions, and the breach of Christian fellowship. Joseph cautioned his brethren, — “See that ye fall not out by the way;” but never did brother, or father, or master, so reiterate the precept, “See that ye love one another ‡;” — never were brethren, or children, or servants, so remiss in their obedience. He made it his dying command, and sealed it with his blood; but his breath was scarcely evaporated, his blood was hardly cold, when his followers began to differ and divide. First concerning meats and drinks, — then about ceremonies and holydays, — the beggarly elements of the world. When persecution arose it united them, and the heathen said, “See how these Christians love;” — but no sooner did peace and prosperity dawn on them, then they again began to differ and divide §. A word, or a letter, was sufficient to break com-

* John xiii. 35. † 1 Cor. xiii. 13. ‡ See John xv. 12, 17, &c.

§ “At first,” says Celsus, the bitter enemy of Christians in the third century, “at first, when they were but few, they agreed; but when they became a multitude, they were rent again and again; and each will have their own factions, for they had factious spirits from the beginning.” — *Milner's Church History*, vol. I, cent. iii, chap. 21.

munion* ; and soon, reversing the command of their Master, they cursed one another in their prayers and in their creed †. He had commanded them to eat and drink together in his name ‡, which, among the heathen, was a bond of friendship ; and the savage that ate with an enemy pledged his own life for his safety ; but they quarrelled in the very act, and instead of a bond of union, found in it a ground of war, like that of Amalek — “ from generation to generation — even for ever.” Every new persecution drew them together, as sheep are driven by the shepherd’s dog : every interval of peace and liberty scattered them, as sheep are scattered without a shepherd. So prone are Christians to forget the first principles of their religion, or to act in opposition to them. The principles of Christianity are, however, still the same,—love and unity.

The nature of the church’s unity comes now under our enquiry, and is of great importance, since conformity in faith and ceremonies has been made the common ground of persecution. “ The community asserted,” says the great *Calvin*, “ is such as *Luke* describes, that “ the multitude of of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul :” and *Paul*, when he exhorts the *Ephesians* to be “ one body and one spirit, even as they

* ὁμοουσιος and ὁμοιουσιος differ but in one letter ; the former, being the *shibboleth* of the Orthodox, means that the Son was of the *same* substance with the Father ; the latter, being the *shibboleth* of the Semi-Arians, means that he was of *like* substance ; and persecution was grounded on this nice distinction.— See the last Essay.

† See the Athanasian Creed, and the Communion in the Book of Common Prayer.

‡ 1 Cor. xi. 25.

were called in one hope.' Nor is it possible, if they are truly persuaded that God is a common Father to them all, and Christ their common Head, but that, being united in brotherly affection, they should mutually communicate their advantages to each other*."

That this union cannot imply a perfect unity of *opinion*, is evident from the nature of the case; for no two persons, who allow themselves to think at all, can on all points think perfectly alike. Differences of sentiment, in fact, prevailed in the Christian church from the beginning, as to the eating of meats offered to idols, and other points already mentioned, on which St. Paul himself advises every one to "be persuaded in his own mind," and act accordingly †. Even divine inspiration and the gift of miracles did not produce a perfect uniformity. The apostles Peter and Paul differed, not indeed on any point of Christian doctrine, but on a question of discipline, more important than many that have divided modern churches; and yet we have no kind of evidence that they broke communion, nor is the fact supposed; much less did they excommunicate or anathematize each other.

Here I beg leave to remark, that every thing in the primitive churches was calculated to promote love and unity, perhaps in a degree impracticable, or at least that is not practised, in any modern churches. Many things contributed to

* Calvin's Institutions, book iv. cap. 1 (Allen's Translation) vol. iii. p. 8, 9.

† Rom. xiv. 5.

this. The voice which all the members had in the government and discipline of the churches and the meetings, whether public or private, which they held for the exercise of their spiritual gifts*, while they called forth all the talents of their members, endeared them also to each other, as brethren of the same family: and though they had Bishops and Presbyters, what were these

* The species of communion above referred to is unknown, in the generality of modern churches, of any denomination, though it may be sometimes winked at, in the *private* societies of its members. Nothing can be clearer, however, than that, in the primitive churches, either at their public or private meetings, every member (among the *males*, at least) had the privilege of expressing his sentiments and feelings. It is true, that great wisdom and prudence were necessary in the management of these, and this probably occasioned their discontinuance. Something of the kind has, however, generally attended remarkable revivals of religion. Such were the *prophesyings*, as they were called, in the times of Queen Elizabeth; and the meetings for prayer and expounding, at the rise of Methodism, which produced so many local and itinerant preachers: not learned divines indeed, but often men of strong natural powers, plain sense, zeal, and piety. Many of these laboured with their own hands, like Paul, to support themselves, while, at the same time, they spread the gospel at a small expence; for it would require the resources of a rich establishment to support wholly the number of preachers employed in the Methodist Societies, Arminian and Calvinistic. This is not meant to set aside the necessity of a learned ministry, but to point out an able body of auxiliaries; and if ever the world be evangelized, it must be by such instruments, or by miracle.

We hear much complaint, in different denominations, of the want of Missionaries;—this would probably produce a speedy supply. It would, however, require great wisdom and prudence to encourage modest zeal—to repress ignorant impertinence—to point out the proper course of study, and the most suitable sphere of usefulness to each, whether private or public: and it is a consciousness of inability to govern and direct so vast a machine, that perhaps deters ministers from putting it into motion,—a machine as powerful on the human mind as the steam engine in our manufactories.

but overseers and elders *? whose offices, indeed, implied government and subordination, but not tyranny or servility. They were in no case to *lord* it “over God’s heritage.” Indeed, so jealous were they of partiality to the higher classes of society, that the brother of our Lord would not suffer the rich to claim a higher sitting than the poor †.

But wherein then did the unity of the primitive church consist? I answer, “In a unity of principle (not of individual principles) and of affection.” There were certain grand points of faith in which they all substantially agreed, as instructed by the same Spirit; while on other articles they were taught to exercise forbearance, and to receive each other *as Christ received them*—“not to doubtful disputations ‡,” but in the exercise of mutual love. This love to each other was indeed for the truth’s sake — that is, for the sake of the gospel; the grand points in which they all agreed, and not the minor ones, in which they differed. They

* See Mosheim’s *Ecl. Hist.* vol. i. ch. 2 (Baynes’s ed.) p. 105. — *Comment.* vol. i. p. 210, Note x. — Lord King’s *Enquiry into the Primitive Church*, Part I. ch. 6 and 7.

† James ii. 2, 3. After all the critical skill that has been bestowed on this passage, it appears to me that the most obvious is the genuine sense,—that by the *synagogues* are meant (as Macknight admits) the places of worship of the converted Jews; and that the brother of our Lord (an old fisherman, it may be recollected, not accustomed to refined society, and its polished manners!) meant to reprove their solicitude to accommodate rich strangers with “the uppermost seats in their synagogues.” (See Luke xi. 43.) analagous to the green and red pews of modern chapels, while no care was taken to accomodate the poor members of their societies, who could not pay, and were therefore left to stand in the aisles, or sit on the steps of the others’ seats.

‡ Rom. xiv. 1; xv. 7.

were like the chords of a harp, not all tuned to the same note, but by the same standard. Such was the harmony of the church of Christ in the apostolic age.

I have said they were united in principle — a principle which at once attached them to the Saviour and to each other. They were of one mind, “and with one mouth glorified God.” It has been often observed that real Christians differ less in their devotion than in their creeds; and nothing, perhaps, more unites them than frequent communion in religious exercises, and in experimental conversation. The connection between the church and its members is like that of the mother and her unborn child, — it is vital, and communicates, as it were, from heart to heart.

The church of Christ is his mystical body; and a schism between his real disciples is a schism between the hand and the foot, or the ear and the eye, which St. Paul so strongly deprecates in his first epistle to the Corinthians. “Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it*.” The union of the church is then like the union of members in the same body; and the excision of one of these, known or believed to be such, is a crime, for which scarcely any term that I am acquainted with, is sufficiently strong and pointed.

* 1 Cor. xii. 26, 27.

But the mystic body of Christ is animated, and the residence of the same Spirit in the head and members, while it gives life to the whole frame, is also the cause of identity, and the source of union: for if we enquire into the source of union in the church, the sacred writers refer us to the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. "There is one body, and one Spirit — one Lord — one faith — one baptism*,"—which last, if not exclusively, yet principally, I conceive, refers to the baptism of the Holy Ghost, which is certainly the "bond of union." On this passage Dr. *Macknight* very justly remarks, in accordance with what is observed above, that "this is not so much an unity of sentiment as of affection; for it appears from ver. 4, that this unity is founded on the relation which subsists among persons who are members of one body, church, or society, of which Christ is the Head,—who worship one and the same God, by the same religious rites,—who enjoy the gifts and assistances of one and the same Spirit of God,—and who have all an equal right to the same spiritual privileges. These, as well as their common wants, ought to endear Christians to one another, and beget in them the same temper of virtue. In this sense, they who are "joined to the Lord, by faith, are said to be *one spirit* with him, —1 Cor. vi. 17. †"

Pupils generally imbibe, more or less, the ideas of their master; and, could he communicate his spirit with his instructions, the similarity would

* Eph. iv. 5.

† Macknight on Ephes. iv. 3.

be uniform. This is happily the case in the present instance. Christ has not only communicated his mind and will to us in the Scriptures, but he has promised his *Spirit* to lead us into all “*the truth*,” and this in a way as honorable to himself as advantageous to us. “He shall take of the things which are mine, and shew them unto you:” that is, he shall not, like a new Preceptor, advance new principles by new methods; but “he shall take the lessons taught in the word, and exhibit them in such a light as cannot fail to impress them upon the understanding and the heart.” As it is in nature, so it is in grace — it is by the light only that we see light*. As light is the only substance which renders itself visible, so grace, by its own efficacy, sanctifies the heart; but the word of Christ is the constant medium of illumination and sanctification. “He shall take of the things which are mine, and shew them unto you.”

But the only question in which we are immediately concerned, at present, is, How far the teaching of the same Spirit, by the word, produces unity of doctrine? “He shall lead you into all *the truth* †.” I have said above, that “there are certain grand points of faith in which all believers are substantially agreed,” and without which no degree of moral virtue can form a Christian; for no man who rejects the great scheme of Christ’s mediatorial work — the system of redemption by

* Psalm xxxvi. 9. † John xvi. 13, *την αληθειαν.*

his blood — the gospel — *the truth* — has any just claim to the character of being his disciple*.

Our Lord, in more particularly describing the work of the Holy Spirit, says, he shall “reprove (or *convict* †) the world of sin, because they believe not in me,— [convince them] of [my] righteousness, because I go to my Father,—and of judgment [upon my enemy] because the prince of this world is judged ‡”—that is, Satan is brought to judgment; for the death of Christ was a triumph over the Devil, destruction to his works, and deliverance for the victims of his power and deception. He came to “destroy the works of Devil,” and in his crucifixion, “having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly (for he led Captivity captive §) triumphing over them *in* [*by* or *upon*] it ||”—that is, upon his cross.

* Lord Chancellor King, in explaining the nature of Christian union, states, 1, *Negatively*, that it did *not* consist in “uniformity of rites and customs,” nor in “unanimity of consent to the *non*-essential points of Christianity;” but, 2, *Positively*, it did consist in “an harmonious assent to the essential articles of religion,” and “in the members’ love and amity toward each other.” Of all these particulars he adduces proof, in order to illucidate the nature of schism.—See *Enquiry*, part I. chap. 9.

† Ελεγχει, *convict*, or *convince*.

‡ John xvi. 8—11.

§ Eph. iv. 8.

|| Col. ii. 15. — I know this is an unusual rendering of the particle *in*, but I beg leave to suggest that the context leads to it, the apostle representing the cross as the scene of triumph. Perhaps this preposition may be so used in correspondence with the Hebrew *beth*, to which all the grammarians assign the sense of *on*, or *upon*, in some instances; so it seems to be used in Acts vii. 33; and it is undoubtedly thus used in composition,—as in *εμβλεπω*, *to look upon*, — *ιμπαριζω*, *to play upon*, — *εμπτω*, *to spit upon*, &c.

This was the only *display* the Saviour ever made before the world. He used the cross as a footstool to his throne; and promised an interest in his kingdom to one of his fellow-sufferers, who though he believed in his divine mission, seems not to have anticipated that his glory was so nigh. "Lord," said he, "remember me, *when* thou comest into thy kingdom!" "*To-day*," replied the Saviour, "shalt thou be with me in Paradise*."

In this instance, I apprehend, we have an illustration of the apostolic maxim, that "no man can say that Jesus is Lord, but by the Holy Ghost †." In an age and country where Christianity is the established religion, this seems an extraordinary assertion; but to confess Christ in the midst of sufferings and death, was a case obviously very different: yet in all cases it is certain, that the influences of the Holy Spirit are necessary, to make us the willing and obedient subjects of the Redeemer's kingdom.

But though the faith of Christians may be substantially the same, I am far from thinking *all* the primitive Christians would have explained their principles in precisely the same terms. It was religious controversy which taught them to be accurate in expression; and I am very apprehensive, that if an inquisitor (whether Popish or Protestant) had come with his books and his pen, to scrutinize their faith, that many of them would not have stood the test of his creeds, articles, and confessions. Perhaps some would have con-

* Luke xxiii. 42, 43.

† 1 Cor. xii. 3.

fessed, with the good woman in Fox's Martyrology, "I cannot dispute for Christ, but I can burn for him."

Indeed, by looking into the early fathers, as well as the latter, we soon perceive a want of uniformity of expression; and yet amidst all this we find a glowing attachment to the Saviour, a jealousy for his honour, and a devotedness to his service; and though, on many points, they might be puzzled to answer some of the questions of our modern catechisms, yet we should find in them a decided conviction of their own unworthiness, and of the necessity of divine grace; with an unanimous ascription of their salvation to the mercy of God, and the merits of the Lamb.

Nor do I conceive the repetition of creeds or catechisms the best proof of orthodoxy, even now. They may be learned by heart, with very little conception of their meaning. If you wish to ascertain a child's knowledge of divine truth, put your question into other words, equally easy indeed, but different from those which he has been taught to use. As respects adult Christians of simple education, if you interrogate them on points relative to human depravity, or the cause, the means, and the nature of salvation, there will be much harmony in their replies, and they will generally be expressed in Scripture language. It is the use of scholastic terms which introduces heresies.

I know it is generally considered, that Scripture language is too vague and equivocal to be made the criterion of orthodoxy, because all sects

adopt it; but I know of no authority we have to form another standard; and though some men, of very unchristian principles, may subscribe to the Scriptures, when they do it with such limitations as imply it to be their opinion, that Peter was ignorant, or Paul erroneous; and that even Jesus Christ himself was "peccable and fallible," I humbly conceive they might, with the same good faith, subscribe to the Koran of Mahomet, or the Shasters of the Hindoos.

If, indeed, orthodoxy is to be made the term of admission to the temporalities of an established church, I know of no articles which could exclude men, whose primary object is worldly interest. Thirty-nine articles, we see, will not do it; for we have had Arians, Socinians, Antinomians, and even Sceptics, in the church; and were they multiplied tenfold, and drawn up with all the quibbling skill of a committee of lawyers and civilians, it would be of no avail. Men, devoid of principle, look not at the means, but at the end; and while they see "a snug dormitory in the church," as Cowper says, think nothing of the risk in climbing to it. *They* are men of principle, who refuse to sign articles which they do not believe; and these are not the men against whom the church ought principally to guard.

Creeds and articles will not ensure union of sentiment, either in an established or seceding church. The only way I can conceive to restore unanimity among Christians, is by returning to the simplicity of the Scriptures, — content to be as orthodox as Christ and his apostles; and

as the Bible circulates more extensively, and is more generally read, I have some hope, that if our creeds should be less systematic, they will be more scriptural; nor can I suppose our devotions will be less acceptable to their great Object, from being offered in language more approaching that of divine revelation.

ESSAY II.

On the Original Terms of Church Communion.

“It is treason — more than treason — for any set of men to make the laws of Christ of none effect by their canons; and to exclude from the benefit of his institutions those whom he commands them to receive.”

Bogue and Bennett's Hist. of Dissenters.

THE Terms of Communion, instituted by Christ himself, relate only, as I apprehend, to the essentials of Christianity; or to those principles of faith and action, which are necessary to salvation. Love to Christ and obedience to his commands form these essentials, and are the universal characteristics of his disciples, in the New Testament. To be a true Christian, was then the only term of Christian communion, and consequently ought still so to be. Good *John Bunyan* expresses this sentiment, somewhat quaintly, indeed; but with a liberality much beyond that of the times

in which he lived. “The church of Christ,” saith he, “hath not warrant to keep out of their communion the Christian that is discovered to be a visible saint, by the word;—the Christian that walketh according to the light he hath with God*.”

What are the evidences of any person being ‘a visible saint,’ or ‘a true Christian?’—is not here the question.—“By their fruits ye shall know them,” saith our Lord; and it is certainly the duty of every Christian society to enquire into the fruits of faith, as evidences of its being genuine, in every candidate proposed to their communion; but, satisfied on this point, I contend, that they have no right to require any thing farther, as the term or condition of their admission.

“Whosoever (says Mr. *Locke*) requires those things in order to ecclesiastical communion, which Christ does not require in order to life eternal, he may, perhaps, indeed constitute a society accommodated to his own opinion, and his own advantage; but how that can be called the Church of Christ, which is established upon laws that are not his, and which excludes such persons from its communion, as he will one day receive into the kingdom of Heaven, I understand not †.”

The liberal Bishop *Hoadley* says—“In all other societies, the express will of the founder, and the terms of fellowship and communion which he has laid down, are accounted sacred. In all other kingdoms, the will of the supreme

* Bunyan's Differences of Judgment about Water-Baptism. Address to the Reader, Works, vol. i. 8vo.

† Letter on Toleration, p. 26, 12mo, 1800.

power is a law. No one pretends, or dares pretend, to make laws of equal force with his. How hard then is the fate of the Christian church, or of the kingdom of Christ, when his will is declared insufficient, and the invented words and decisions of his subjects are made co-ordinate with his own, equally exclusive of others of his subjects from the communion of their fellow-subjects! And how hard is the fate of those believers in him, who desire communion *upon the terms God has prescribed*, to be excluded by the words of men — by the inventions of men — imposed upon them for his precepts! And how unhappy is the church, to be reduced, by any such methods, within more narrow bounds than our Lord himself has confined it!*

An eminent writer of the present day says — “The practice of incorporating private opinions and human inventions with the constitution of a church, and with the terms of communion, has long appeared to him untenable in its principle, and pernicious in its effects. There is no position in the whole compass of theology, of the truth of which he (Mr. Hall) feels a stronger persuasion, than that no man, or set of men, are entitled to prescribe, as an indispensable condition of communion, what the New Testament has not enjoined as a condition of salvation †.”

These, however, are but human authorities, and no farther to be regarded than as the reasoning employed is founded on the principles of

* Hoadley's Postscript to his Answer to Bishop Hare, p. 254.

† Hall on Terms of Communion, second edit. p. iv.

Scripture and of common sense; for doubtless great names, and perhaps more of them, may be found in favour of human articles and creeds, as terms of Christian communion; but “to the law and the testimony” is our appeal: and in farther prosecuting this enquiry, the following circumstances must be considered:—

1. The manner in which our Lord characterizes the future members of his church, or in other terms, the subjects of his kingdom. They must be “born again,”—“born of water and of the Spirit;” -- they must “repent, and believe the gospel”—“believe and be baptized;” and when, after his resurrection, Jesus sent his apostles forth, their commission was, to “teach [or disciple] all nations, baptizing them,” &c.

2. When the apostles did go forth and “preach the gospel to every creature”—“then they that gladly received the word were baptized; and” (in one instance) “the same day there were added [unto them—*i. e.* the church] about three thousand souls;”—in another case, “many which heard the word believed; and the number of the men was about five thousand;”—and, after the death of Ananias and Sapphira, “believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes, both of men and women*.” I confess, however, that these texts appear to me to refer to additions made to Christ’s church universal by conversion, rather than to their being admitted to any particular church or congregation; but if they refer to the

* Acts ii. 41; iv. 4; v. 14.

latter, still here is no reference to any “form of sound words*,” whether creed or catechism, to be subscribed or recited, previous to their admission to communion.

3. The addresses to the primitive churches, in the apostolical epistles, characterize them in general terms only, as “the saints — the called — the faithful — the elect and sanctified.” Thus, the first epistle (as arranged in our New Testament) is addressed “to all that be in Rome, *beloved* of God, and *called* to be saints;”—the next, to “the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are *sanctified* in Christ Jesus, *called* to be saints, with all that, in every place, call upon the name of Jesus Christ, both theirs and ours;”—another, “to the *saints* and *faithful* in Christ, which are at Colosse;”—and so of the rest. Now, in all these cases, there seems to be no reference to their opinions, or even the articles of their faith; but they are described by characters common to every true Christian, and referring only to the essence of Christianity.

4. When these Christians are exhorted to faith and holiness, such exhortations are not formed on any particular sentiment in which one Christian might differ from another, but refer to “the

* This expression, “The *form* of sound words” (2 Tim. i. 13) has been eagerly caught at by some writers, as the first intimation of an established creed; but is rather a model or pattern to be imitated, than exactly copied. *Wetstein* explains the word (*ὑποτυπώσεις*) as denoting a *painter's sketch*.

If, however, St. Paul refers to any “form of words,” it must be scriptural, and is our authority for adhering to the language of inspiration.—*See Macknight.*

common faith *”—“the common salvation †”—in which they all agreed, and which they all pursued. Thus, the doctrine of justification by faith, which used to be considered as a fundamental principle, is made the ground of an argument (not for licentiousness, as some have considered it, but) for holiness. “What shall we say then, shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid ‡.” So the doctrines of a resurrection and future state are, in another epistle, made the foundation of an exhortation to zeal, diligence, and perseverance, in the Christian life: “therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord §.” And in other epistles, arguments to the same effect are drawn from the dignity of Christ’s person and mission — from the work of redemption — the gift of the Holy Spirit — and the destruction of the present world. “Seeing, therefore, all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be ¶?”

5. The rule of admission given by St. Paul is—“Receive ye one another, *as* Christ also received us, to the glory of God,” and “not to doubtful disputation ¶,”—which I consider as an express prohibition to exclude any one from Christian communion, on account of questions which do not concern the glory of God, or on which real Christians are and may be divided: and so plainly

* Titus i. 4.

† Jude 3.

‡ Rom. vi. 1.

§ 1 Cor. xv. 58. ¶ 2 Pet. iii. 11, &c. ¶ Rom. xv. 7; xiv. 1.

doth this appear to be the apostle's meaning, that I know of no other interpretation which does not, in my conception, offer violence to the sacred text.

6. In cases referring to the worship of God, or admission into his church, though positive precepts were often dispensed with, moral purity, or personal holiness, never was. Of the *positive* precepts thus occasionally dispensed with, I observe the following:— 1. *Circumcision*, during the passage of Israel forty years through the desert; Josh. v. 5,—“All the people that were born in the wilderness . . . they had not circumcised.” 2. *Sacrifices*, Ps. l. 8,—“I will not reprove thee for thy sacrifices, or thy burnt-offerings [which ought] to have been continually before me.” 3. The *Sabbath*, Matt. xii. 5,—“On the Sabbath-day, the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath, and are blameless.” 4. In the same chapter (ver. 4) we read that David “did eat the shew-bread, which it was not lawful for him to eat,” and yet is justified in it by our Lord himself: but where do we read of moral precepts being thus dispensed with, or transgressions of the moral law excused? Indeed, whenever moral precepts and positive institutes come in competition, no comparison is admitted; but the Lord says—“I *will* have mercy, and *not* sacrifice,” Matt. ix. 13; and when sacrifices have been offered to him, instead of mercy, how indignantly hath he rejected them! “Who hath required this at your hands? . . . bring no more vain oblations: incense is an abomination to me,” &c. Isa. i. 10—16.

Lastly, When any are repelled or rejected from the Christian church, it is never for the want of circumcision, or baptism, or any other external rite; but always for moral pravity, or fundamental error: “ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.” Jude, ver. 5.

When I had written thus far, I met with the following passage, in a work where I had not been led to expect so much liberality; and as it is to the point in question, and will occasion little repetition, I beg leave to transcribe it:—“There does not appear to be any good reason (says my author) why a church shall not admit to communion “ALL who love our Lord Jesus in sincerity.” Many passages of Scripture seem to teach us to do so. Paul, having stated that nothing availed, but “a new creature,” adds, “As many as walk by this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God*.” In writing to Timothy he says, “Follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them who call on the Lord out of a pure heart†.” I cannot conceive words more expressly to enjoin the forbearance for which we plead, than—“Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded; and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God will reveal even this unto you. Nevertheless, whereunto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing‡.” If any have

* Gal. vi. 16. † 2 Tim. ii. 22. ‡ Phil. iii. 15, 16.

attained to faith in the same Saviour, and to “follow after holiness,” ought they not to “receive one another as Christ hath also received them, to the glory of God*?”

“The apostle, indeed, beseeches the Corinthians, by the name of the Lord Jesus, that they “all speak the same thing,” and that there be “no divisions” [or schisms] among them; but that they be perfectly joined together, in “the same mind and the same judgment †.” This is most earnestly to be wished; and to this blessed state shall all Christians arrive, when they see “face to face.” While they are here, they ought to be diligently pressing forward towards perfection in knowledge and holiness ‡; and the greater progress they make, the more nearly will they agree with each other; but in their present imperfect state they must “forbear one another in love, endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit, in the bond of peace §:” and this will be necessary “till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God — unto a perfect man — unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ ||.” When the exhortation to the Corin-

* Rom. xv. 7.

† 1 Cor. i. 10.

‡ A certain author, who shall be nameless, is silly enough to ridicule the idea of aiming at what is unattainable; as if we were to place no copies before our children — no models before our pupils — but what we thought them capable of equalling. “Be ye perfect, as your Father which is in heaven is perfect,” (Matt. v. 48) surely does not imply that men on earth, or even saints in heaven, can equal the purity of Deity, but that they should endeavour to approximate it. To aim at perfection is the only way to attain to real excellence.

§ Ephes. iv. 2, 3.

|| Ephes. iv. 3.

thians is taken by itself, it may appear to countenance the necessity of the actual existence of perfect unity of sentiment in the churches of Christ; but if we consider its connection, we shall perceive that the exhortation is directed against strife, factions, and parties, which assuredly ought not to be permitted in a church. This will be more manifest, if we compare it with a similar sentiment, where the apostle is inculcating mutual forbearance. Having exhorted the strong to bear the infirmities of the weak, and prayed that in this very thing* they might be like-minded with Christ, who pleased not himself; he adds, "that ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ †." *Forbearance*, then, is the *right road to unity ‡.*"

This last is a golden maxim, and induces me to copy another paragraph from the same writer. "Individual members ought also to exercise forbearance toward a church; they are not at liberty to leave it, although there may be some differences of opinion among them. It is equally important for a church to act in the same manner towards individuals. It is true, that ignorance in religion is often sinful; but there are different degrees of guilt. A man may be in the dark, as to some things, from the prejudices of education, or other causes and prejudices, while he is living near to

* *Tὸ αὐτό.*

† Rom. xv. 6.

‡ Haldane's *View of Social Worship*, p. 375—7. This reminds me of the maxim of a great political writer — "The true secret to govern Sectaries is to tolerate them."

God, and seeking to know his will more perfectly. Scriptural forbearance does not teach us to treat the things in which we differ from others as matters of no moment. All divine truth is important. But it is perfectly consistent with strict scriptural discipline, to hold communion with those who believe the gospel, and are exemplary in their conduct, while they are ignorant of some points, which we yet consider to be revealed by God*.”

But to return to our argument, on the Terms of Church Communion. The reader will probably recollect that, early in this Essay, several texts were quoted, which connected with our subject water-baptism; and which have induced many Christians to consider that as an absolute pre-requisite to such communion. They are such as these: “Except a man be *born of water and of the Spirit*, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God †:”—“Go teach all nations, *baptizing* them:—and he that believeth, and is *baptized*, shall be saved ‡.”—In these and other passages, baptism stands connected with conversion, with faith, with pardon, and with admission to the Christian church, to which it was certainly the usual introduction: but the difficulty is, that baptism is equally connected with salvation; and the same texts which prove baptism essential to communion, will also prove it essential to final happiness. Let us examine the most important passages.

“Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.”

* Haldane's View, p. 374, 5.

† John iii. 5.

‡ Mark xvi. 16.

It does not seem very important whether, by “the kingdom of God,” be here meant the kingdom of Christ in the present, or the future state; since none who are not the subjects of the former, by regeneration, can have any claim to admission into the latter. To be “born of water,” is therefore essential in both cases, or in neither. It cannot refer to a mere profession of religion, for certainly the new birth is not requisite to this; and as to water-baptism, however important it may be thought to church-membership, it can hardly be supposed absolutely necessary to our being the subjects of Christ’s kingdom, either here or in another world. This has induced many to interpret the expression of figurative, or spiritual baptism, the *one* baptism of the New Testament, which alone is necessary both to communion and salvation*.

However, the ablest commentators, I believe, consider being “born of the Spirit” as the only

* This is the interpretation adopted by the Society of Friends, but is by no means confined to them.

“It is not necessary in this place to understand material water, but rather the purifying grace of Christ, as in chap. iii. 11.”—Dr. *Fulke on the Rhemish Test.*

“To be born of water and of the Spirit, is an Hebraism, which signifies *spiritual water.*” See Matt. iii. 11. — *Saurin’s Sermons*, vol. vii. p. 418. See also *Poli. Synop. Crit.* in loc. vol. iv.

This reduces the baptisms of the New Testament to “one baptism,” Ephes. iv. 5; and it is perfectly consistent with the manner of the sacred writers to sink external rites into their spiritual design; but in no case to sink an essential point of religion into an outward rite. John the baptist rightly said, when Christ appeared, “He must increase, but I must decrease.” So, when St. Peter makes Noah’s flood a type, he does not allude to water-baptism, but to its moral import—“the answer of a good conscience,” &c. 1 Pet. iii. 21.

absolute requisite to salvation ; and baptism as its usual, but by no means indispensable accompaniment ; since it seems opposite to the very nature of Christianity to make its grand essential to consist merely in an external rite, to which have conformed, in some instances, the greatest of hypocrites, and the worst of men*.

In other passages of Scripture, baptism stands connected with *faith*, in a manner which has led some persons to consider them equally indispensable. Thus, when our Lord, after his resurrection, commissioned his apostles to “preach the gospel to every creature,” he added, “he that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved.” Here faith is certainly the great essential of Christianity, and baptism is introduced as the usual and regular expression of that faith ; but by no means equally indispensable, since, in the latter member of the sentence, it is not said, “He that is not baptized ;” but, “he that believeth not — shall be condemned.”

Faith (which, when genuine, always includes repentance) is often made necessary both to communion and salvation, but baptism never is ; for though it be the regular path to both, it is not,

* Dr. *Mant* indeed, and some other high-church writers, make baptism to be the only regeneration, and therefore indispensable. “We argue for baptism being the vehicle of regeneration, because it is the vehicle of salvation.”—*Mant on Regeneration*, p. 35.

Whether this be the doctrine of the church of England, I leave others to enquire, —I have to do only with the doctrine of the Scriptures. Those who are interested in the other question, I refer to the able tracts of Mr. *Biddulph*, Mr. *Scott*, and Mr. *Bugg*, in answer to Dr. *Mant*.

I conceive, absolutely requisite to either. This rite may admit its subjects within the pale of Christianity, but does not of itself, even in the view of our Baptist brethren, admit to the communion of any particular society or church. Some baptized adults have never been admitted to communion, whether through the intervention of death or other circumstances; and it is no singular thing, for a person convinced of the duty of adult baptism, to submit to the ordinance, and then immediately to join a Pædo-baptist church; and this not from capriciousness, but the ordinance has been administered with that understanding.

To sum up these remarks, — though baptism was *generally* previous to church communion, I am not sure that it was *always* so. Those who believed were usually baptized, and of course admitted to the Lord's Supper; yet it is possible — I may say *probable* — that from the first there might be exceptions. Cases might occur of persons who believed, and yet were not baptized; or of persons being baptized, and yet not admitted to communion: so, on the other hand, I have ~~no~~ proof that, under some peculiar circumstances, persons might not be admitted to communion without Christian (or perhaps any water-) baptism. Mr. *Hall* thinks that this was the case even of some of the apostles, of whose baptism we have certainly no account*. And should a

* “ Since it is manifest that the baptism of John did not supercede the Christian ordinance, they being perfectly distinct, it is natural

pious person in our times, who has not, in any manner, been baptized*, object to the rite, as

to enquire who baptized the apostles, and the 120 disciples assembled with them at the day of Pentecost. My deliberate opinion is, that, in the *Christian* sense of the term, they were not baptized at all. . . . It is almost certain that some, probably most of them, had been baptized by John; but for reasons which have been already amply assigned, this will not account for their not submitting to the Christian ordinance. The true account seems to be, that the precept of baptism had no retrospective bearing; and that consequently its obligation extended only to such as were converted to Christianity, subsequently to the time of its promulgation. Such as had professed their faith in Christ, from the period of his first manifestation, could not, without palpable incongruity, recommence that profession, which would have been to cancel and annul their former religious pretensions. . . . When St. Paul says, "As many of us as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (Rom. vi. 3) his language seems to intimate that there were a class of Christians to whom this argument did not apply."—*Hall on Communion*, p. 40.

* I am far from wishing to enter into the thorny questions respecting baptism, and particularly as to the *mode*; but even supposing immersion to have been the ancient form, I cannot but think that those who now use it have deviated in some very expressive circumstances. Mr. *Robinson*, some time since, reprehended the very indecorous mode of throwing the subject on his back, instead of bowing, as an act of worship, "in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."—See *Robinson's Hist. of Baptism*, p. 7.

And a learned and ingenious writer has very recently stated strong reasons to believe, that pouring was added to *immersion*, which he considers as going *into* the water, and not *submersion*, or going *under* it, as now practised in adult baptism.—See *Letters to the Deacons of a Baptist Church*, by the Editor of *Calmet*.

But not to insist on these circumstances respecting baptism, have not the same brethren introduced variations, fully as important as can be the difference between sprinkling and immersion, into the sister ordinance of the Lord's Supper? Is it not certain this was instituted late in the evening, after the passover? whereas they communicate generally in the afternoon service. Was it not administered with unleavened bread? (being a time when no leaven was suffered in their houses, Exod. xii. 19); and is not this circumstance mentioned by the apostle, as eminently significant? (1 Cor. v. 7, 8)—and yet is it not now universally administered with bread that has been leavened? I am not prepared to say what was the kind or

not of permanent obligation, or as applying only to converts from Judaism and Idolatry (as some have done) I doubt if any Christian church would be justified, in refusing to admit him to communion, on *that ground alone*.

If we examine the nature of the communion itself, we shall find some circumstances very revolting, in the idea of debarring from it any real Christian. It is "the Lord's table,"—at which "the Lord's Supper" is administered—to "the Lord's people;" and shall we exclude from it such as are unquestionably of that character, merely from their mistaken views (presuming them to be so) of an external ordinance, when at the same time it is our hope to sit down with them at "the marriage-supper of the Lamb?*"

quality of the wine used, but I have no doubt in saying what we now use is very different: and that they *ate* and *drank*, whereas we only *taste* and *sip*. I mention these things, not to find needless fault, but to silence those who do.

* The late Mr. Robinson, of Cambridge, has so finely wrought up this argument, drawn from Christian affection, that I cannot forbear inserting an abstract of the passage in my margin:—

"I sometimes imagine, I see a pastor of a strict Baptist Church, consisting of 200 members, sitting in his chair at a Church Meeting, his members all present. I fancy I see a venerable grey-headed old gentleman rise, and hear him inform the church, that five gentlemen and five ladies, now in an adjoining room, desired to be admitted to make a profession of their faith in Christ, and repentance toward God, and to declare, in the gates of Zion, what the Lord had done for their souls, in order to their admission to fellowship; adding, that they . . . were well known to have undoubted piety and unspotted morality: they held, indeed, *infant sprinkling* for Christian baptism; however, that was no obstacle to him; and he proposed them as members fit to be *tolerated* in a New Testament church. Their names were John Calvin, the Reformer; Wm. Tindal, the translator of the Bible; John Owen, Vice Chancellor of Oxford; M. Henry, the Expounder; and Is. Watts, the composer of the psalms and

The essential character of the Lord's Supper is that of *communion*, — the communion of a family derived from the same head, partaking of the same food, enjoying the same privileges; and I am led to ask, Does not the same blood flow through all their veins? Does not the same Spirit animate every heart? Who then shall separate the members of the holy family? Or who shall

hymns on the table. The ladies were Thecla, the writer of the Alexandrian MS; Mary Countess Dowager of Warwick; Lady M. Vere; Lady M. Armyne; and Miss Marg. Baxter, whose praises were in all the churches. The good old man moves that they be admitted, and sits down. I fancy a solemn silence ensues, the feelings of the heart rebel against opinion. I imagine I see in the lower seats tears of gratitude flow from the eyes of industrious labourers employed, widows and orphans fed and clothed, and youths educated by the Christian liberality of some of the ladies. In nearer pews stern Justice sits voting in the features of fathers grown wise by the labours of others of the candidates. The junior members smile affection at the name of Watts, and their parents melt at the sight, venerating a man who allured their much-loved offspring out of the world into the principles of religion, and so into the church. The seven venerable deacons, . . . catch the fire of a holy ambition, to enjoy the great accession of knowledge and virtue, that knocks at their door for admission! . . .

“And you, pastor of the church! you who are both a guide of the blind, and a teacher of babes, what will you do? Rise from your seat, stand up and shew your people the way of salvation! Collect the votes of justice, gratitude, and love; open the gates that the righteous nation, which keepeth the truth, may enter in! Were the apostle Peter in your place, he would say, ‘God hath shewn me that I should not call any man common or unclean.—Of a truth, I perceive God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation he that feareth God and worketh righteousness, is accepted of him. Forasmuch, then as God gave them the like gift as he gave us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, *what am I that I should withstand God?*’ Yea, were the chief Shepherd and Bishop of souls there, would not the goodness of his heart expand his arms, and distil from his lips in accents melodious as these, ‘Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you,—for I was a stranger, and ye took me in.’ — *Miscell. Works*, vol.iii, p. 191.

dare to divide the members of the mystic body? Shall the little differences and misunderstandings which prevail among real Christians, respecting an external, and confessedly a non-essential rite? God forbid!

I am aware that some writers have explained the *communion* (or fellowship) of Christians, as consisting chiefly in their mutual communication of temporalities, or in having "all things in common;" but I doubt the universality of this latter circumstance, even in the apostolic age; nor can it be confined to that, because the term is applied to the body and blood of our Redeemer†; yet I certainly do think, that the benevolence of the first Christians toward each other was so much beyond the practice of modern times, that the statement would appear incredible to many readers, and require an accumulation of evidence to satisfy them, that would far exceed the bounds of this Essay.

It has been indeed supposed, that the doctrine of *Excommunication* implies the right of prescribing terms of Church communion, and of punishing heretics and dissenters; but if the essentials of faith and practice are sufficient to claim the right of admission, nothing but apostasy from that faith, or from practical religion, can afford sufficient ground for such exclusion. Either a man's creed or his conduct must lead us to question the reality of his experience, before we can have ground for his excision. In all

† 1 Cor. x. 16.

Scripture examples this was the case. Those “who denied the Lord who bought them, and put him to an open shame,” could have no longer claim to rank among his disciples, and therefore were properly excluded*.

But what were the nature and effects of this excommunication? Did it extend to fines, imprisonment, and death? No such thing. In excluding apostates from the church, they returned them to the world from whence they came: and and because Satan is the Prince and “God of this world,” therefore are they said to be given over into his hands †, and treated as his servants and children, until brought back by repentance and reformation.

To conclude this Essay, I cannot but think the arguments herein adduced sufficient to justify the proposition with which it commenced, that

* The late excellent Mr. *Booth* seems so far to have forgotten his usual caution as to represent the apostles as giving over a member of Christ to the Devil. His words are,—“Gospel churches are sometimes obliged to exclude from their communion those whom he [Christ] has received, as appears from the case of the incestuous person in the church of Corinth.” 1 Cor. v. 5.

On this Mr. *Hall* very properly asks, “In what light was the incestuous person regarded? . . . Was it under the character of a member of Christ, or an enemy to the gospel? If we believe his own representation, he deemed it necessary for him to be expelled, as an infectious leaven, the continuance of which would corrupt the whole mass; so that whatever proofs of repentance he might afterwards exhibit, these could have no influence on the principle on which he was excluded. When the professors of Christianity are guilty of deliberate violation of the laws of Christ, they are to be treated agreeably to the conduct they exhibit, as bad men, with a hope that the severity of discipline may reclaim and restore them to the paths of rectitude.”—*Hall on Communion*, p. 114.

† 1 Cor. v. 5.

the terms of communion, instituted by Christ himself, include only the grand essentials of Christianity, — faith and obedience. It may be proper to repeat, however, that every Christian society must be supposed competent to judge of what *they* consider as the elements of faith, and the evidences of conversion; but for any church to insist upon articles of faith, or rites of worship, as essential to communion, which they do *not* in conscience believe *necessary* to constitute a true Christian, is, in my view, treason against the King of Saints.

ESSAY III.

The Duty of Enquiry, and the Right of private Judgment and free Discussion.

“Give me the liberty to know, to utter, and to argue freely, according to conscience, above all liberties.” *Milton's Areopag.*

“The man who never enquires after truth will never find it.”

D. Turner's Free Thoughts, p. 22.

RELIGION is a *reasonable* service. “Come now, let us *reason* together, saith the LORD*,” is the language in which Israel was admonished by the evangelical prophet; and, in many other instances, we find JEHOVAH appealing to the

* Isa. i. 18.

reasoning powers with which he has endued mankind: “Hear now, O house of Israel! is not my way equal? Are not your ways unequal*?”

JESUS CHRIST himself appeals to the candid discrimination of his hearers:—“Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment †;” and, in another instance, he thus argues with the most unworthy of them, “Ye hypocrites! ye can discern the face of the sky and of the earth; but how is it that ye do not discern this time? Yea, and why even of yourselves, judge ye not what is right ‡?” The prophets referred “to the law and to the testimony §,” as their sanction; our LORD appeals both to “Moses and the prophets,” for his authority:—“Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think that ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me ||.”

The great apostle of the Gentiles exhorts Christians to “PROVE all things ¶;” on which the illustrious *Milton* thus descants:—“St. Paul judged that, not only to tolerate, but to examine and prove all things, was no danger to our holding fast that which is good. How shall we prove all things, which includes all opinions at least founded on Scripture, unless we not only tolerate them, but patiently hear them, and seriously read them? . . . Is it a fair course [for one] to assert truth, by arrogating to himself the only freedom of speech, and stopping the mouths of

* Ezek. xviii. 25—30; xxxiii. 17—20; Micah vi. 2, &c.

† Matt. vii. 1, 2.

‡ Luke xii. 56, 57.

§ Isa. viii. 20.

|| John v. 39.

¶ 1 Thess. v. 21.

others, equally gifted? This is the direct way to bring in that papistical *implicit* faith, which we all disclaim*." Indeed, nothing can be more abhorrent to the creed of Protestants than implicit faith, and traditional religion; therefore, in another epistle, St. Paul, like his divine Master, appeals to the understanding of his readers — "Brethren, be not children in understanding — I speak as unto wise men, judge ye what I say †."

St. John also exhorts Christians not to believe every spirit, or every teacher that should come among them; but to "try the spirits, whether they be of God ‡." In perfect accordance with this advice, the first ecclesiastical historian, St. Luke, commends, not those Christians which received the truth *without* enquiry, but those who carefully examined the evidences with which it was accompanied. "These [the Bereans] were more noble than those of Thessalonica, because they searched the Scriptures daily, to see if these things were so §," — that is, to see whether the apostles were justified in their appeal to the Old Testament, the only sacred Scripture then extant.

The want of examination is one grand source of infidelity. The primitive Christians were required to give "a reason of their hope ||; and they usually did so in a manner that brought honour to their religion; but in modern times too many have their reasons to seek, when they should produce them; and the consequences have been —

* Of the True Religion, &c. — *Prose Works, by Simmons*, vol. iv. p. 268.

† 1 Cor. xiv. 20; x. 15.

§ Acts xvii. 11.

‡ 1 John iv. 1.

|| 1 Pet. iii. 15.

disgrace to their profession, and confusion to themselves.

It is a great mistake for persons to suppose that they are believers in Christianity, because they have had no doubts; ignorance alone presumes on the truth of principles without enquiry; and it is a maxim equally just, with respect to the evidences as to the experience of religion, that "he has no faith who never doubted."

The first subject of enquiry in religion should always respect its evidences; and it is much to be regretted that, neither in our national or popular catechisms, is there a single question and answer upon the subject. When such enquiries, therefore, are proposed by the enemies of religion, the mind is startled, and the Deist triumphs, in finding the untaught professor has no reasons for his faith. It is true, that there are some arguments for Christianity which require learning and leisure to discuss; but there are others, derived from the holy tendency of its doctrines, and its moral principles, which are level to the meanest capacity; and Sceptics find it more difficult to answer the humble Christian, who can testify the efficacy of religion upon his heart and conduct, than all the arguments of its more learned advocates.

Whatever excuses may be alleged to justify ignorance in religion, that man can never be excused who has a Bible put into his hands, with the ability to read it, and will not examine its contents, especially when its evidences, as well its truths and duties, are stated to be internal.

The plea of many is the want of time; and yet the same persons can read the newspapers daily;

and, perhaps give two or three evenings in a week to company or amusement. Formerly, indeed, the Sabbath used to be devoted to religion; but since the great enemy of mankind has invented Sunday-newspapers, they, in too many cases, supercede both the Bible and public worship: a very serious injury to the morals of society, and especially of the manufacturing classes!

The institution of a gospel ministry is certainly a great blessing to mankind; and the support of men who zealously devote their time and talents to public instruction, and the duties of religious worship, is not only to be justified, but commended: yet, to transfer religion wholly to our ministers, to leave them to enquire and examine the Scriptures *for us*, as if it were no business of our own, is a sad delusion. Religion is a personal concern, and demands individual enquiry; and were this examination thought as important to their temporal as to their spiritual interests, we should not find men so ready to resign it into other hands.

They are not merely the irreligious and profane, who thus shift the duty from them. There are some who consider it not the province of laymen to study the Scriptures; and I even fear that that there may be clergymen, in more than one denomination, who countenance the error, and consider their hearers as bound to receive the truths of religion upon their authority; whereas the Berean Christians before referred to, are commended for not taking the word even of an

apostle, without examination : and I cannot but censure the language too often used in the pulpit, when preachers recommend certain doctrines, with the assurance of their being true, without condescending to lay before their hearers the evidences on which they are founded. But for ministers to venture so far as to pledge, not only their word, but their *soul* for the truth of their assertions, is not only ridiculous, but profane. “None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him*.”

Some indeed, are complaisant enough to suppose their hearers so well acquainted with the Scriptures, that it is unnecessary for them to cite particular passages to prove their doctrines, which is certainly an easy way to save their trouble in producing them ; but it is neither the way to “save their own souls,” nor the souls of those that hear them. The preacher’s authority is not derived from the desk in which he stands, however elevated ; nor from the gown he wears, however elegant ; nor from two or three letters prefixed or appended to his name. The *Bible* is both the source and the ensign of his authority ; without this, his word has no more weight than that of the clerk who sits beneath him. On the other hand, I do not mean that public teachers should be always proving what was never doubted ; nor that they should throw in a quantity of texts, little or nothing to the purpose, as if to make up in number what they

* Ps. xlix. 7.

want in weight*. A preacher's style should be richly imbued with the language of Scripture; but when a point is to be proved, his texts should be few, clear, and decisive †.

A farther impediment to free enquiry is, a prevailing prejudice, that sacred learning is a prerogative of the clergy, and scarcely to be expected in any but those educated for the church. It is unquestionably *their* duty to prosecute and promote such studies; but we have had illustrious laymen, to whom the highest scholars in the church have bowed; and to establish this fact, it is enough to recite the names of Milton, Selden, and Sir Edward Leigh ‡; of Sir Isaac Newton, Mr. Locke, and the eccentric Hutchinson. Even our own times have produced Biblical critics of

* This method of producing, on every subject, a multitude of texts has led to the too fashionable custom of expounding Scripture by the *sound* of words, rather than by the *sense*; and this had been much encouraged by the injudicious use of Concordances, and marginal references; the latter of which have been so multiplied in some Bibles, that I have found not more than one in ten pertinent, or illucidatory. It is not always necessary to know how often the same word is used throughout the Scriptures: the texts compared should at least have some analogy.

† The following custom, among some Christians in India, as mentioned by Dr. Buchanan, is remarkable and striking:—

“*Sattianaden* (the Hindoo preacher) delivered his discourse in the Tamul language, with much natural eloquence, and with visible effect. In quoting a passage from Scripture, he desired a lower minister to read it, listening to it as a *record*; and then proceeded to the illustration.”—*Buchanan's Researches*, p.69, 3d ed.

It is possible this custom may have originated in the want of convenient Bibles for the pulpit; so our Lord, when he had read his text, delivered the roll or volume to the minister of the synagogue (Luke iv. 20) as being inconvenient to hold it in his hands; but now the Bible is become portable, I am not gratified in seeing a preacher put it on one side, as done with, when he has read his text.

‡ Author of *Critica Sacra*, &c.

the first class, in Mr. Bowyer, Sir W. Jones, and those venerable scholars, Jacob Bryant and Granville Sharp; and had I not confined myself to the deceased, I would add one name from that communion most tremblingly alive on this point—the ingenious author of *Horæ Biblicæ*, and other learned works.

It is on *systematic* theology, however, that the clergy, of different denominations, seem particularly jealous; possibly not so much from a mean opinion of our understanding, as from a supposition that laymen are not so deeply interested in the preservation of the faith: but there are considerations which, to those skilled in spiritual arithmetic, may render truth more valuable than if our lives, as well as our livelihood, thereon depended. In times of persecution, the clergy have not furnished more than their proportion to the martyrology. Even in Mary's time, though the whole body of the clergy had been Protestant in the preceding reign, out of 277 persons who suffered at the stake, there were only twenty-six clergymen,—not equal to half the number of the female martyrs!

As to a knowledge of the Scriptures, it is evident that so much does not depend upon critical skill and literary leisure, as upon a mind prepared to receive the truth in love and meekness. When the heart of a sinner is melted down by divine grace, he is ready to pour his very soul into the mould of the gospel*, and receives the impression of its leading principles, with the ease

* See Rom. vi. 17, in the original, or in Macknight.

of liquid metal. This is particularly true as to the doctrines of *grace*; for the heart must be melted before it can be properly impressed. With respect to verbal criticisms, indeed, the illiterate man must feel himself incompetent to discuss them; yet he who has acquired a scriptural *taste*, if I may so express myself, may often form a tolerable judgment even of these, from their analogy with the style and doctrine of other parts of Scripture; but on the practicability of acquiring sound scriptural knowledge, the learned Bishop Horsley gives the following unequivocal opinion:—

“ I will not scruple to assert (says his Lordship) that the most illiterate Christian, if he can but read his English Bible, and will take the pains to read it in this manner [comparing the Scriptures with each other] will not only attain all that practical knowledge which is necessary to his salvation; but, by God’s blessing, he will become learned in every thing relating to his religion in such a degree, that he will not be liable to be misled, either by the refined arguments, or by the false assertions of those, who endeavour to ingraft their own opinion upon the oracles of God. He may safely be ignorant of all philosophy, except what is to be learned from the sacred books; which indeed contain the highest philosophy, adapted to the lowest apprehensions; he may safely remain ignorant of all history, except so much of the history of the first ages of the Jewish, and of the Christian church, as is to be gathered from the canonical books of the Old and New Testament. Let him

study these in the manner I recommend [comparing parallel passages] and let him never cease to pray for the illumination of that Spirit by which these books were dictated; and the whole compass of abstruse philosophy and recondite history shall furnish no argument, with which the perverse will of man shall be able to shake this learned Christian's faith. The Bible, thus studied, will indeed prove to be what we Protestants esteem it, — a certain and sufficient rule of faith and practice, — a *helmet of salvation*, which alone may quench the fiery darts of the wicked *.”

“With respect to the difference of opinion on religious subjects, among Christians,” another prelate, supreme in office, some time since observed, in the highest assembly in the kingdom, “That the basis of religion was the Bible; and he held those to be the most orthodox Christians, who adhered the most strictly to the doctrines laid down in that sacred volume. To *explain* it was the duty of *all mankind*, and its interpretation was confined to no particular sect. To use coercion, in compelling uniformity, was not only impolitic, but, while man was constituted as man, it would be impracticable. The very basis of toleration depended on abstaining from the attempt †.”

It was the doctrine of the immortal Chillingworth, that the Bible, and the Bible *alone*, “is the

* Bishop Horsley's Nine Sermons, p. 227—9. His Lordship appears to have committed a mistake, in quoting this last text from memory.—See Ephes. vi. 16.

† Speech of the Archbishop of Canterbury. *Parliament, Debates*, vol. xx. p. 242.

religion of Protestants ;” and the present pious Bishop of St. David’s (as well as the prelates just referred to) assures us, that the “ Bible alone is the religion of the Church of England ;” tho’ many of the clergy appear to think otherwise. Dr. Marsh in particular (a name of high authority, and now exalted to the mitre) in his “ Enquiry into the Consequences of neglecting to give the Prayer-Book with the Bible,” pretty plainly intimated, that the Bible alone was an insufficient guide. The Margaret Professor was probably not aware that he had taken his stand on Popish ground ; the Catholic priest, *Gandolphy*, however, finding him here, was so delighted, that he instantly printed “ A Congratulatory Letter” to the Doctor, with a friendly invitation to take another step, and reconcile himself completely to the mother church. Dr. Marsh felt indignant at this ; and in his reply endeavoured to make the Catholic feel that he had triumphed too soon, and that he had not intentionally given up *the vital principle* of Protestantism. To this the priest replies, “ You seem to have clothed yourself in Catholic armour, unconscious of the banners under which you were fighting ; but let us take courage in consistency, and our cause will never fail to triumph ; having thrown away your own arms, as it is a Catholic weapon that you have seized, it is from a Catholic you should learn how to manage it*.”

Indeed, the Professor does appear at some loss to *manage* his weapons ; for, in order to get rid of the dilemma into which he was thus inadvertently

* *Gandolphy's Reply to Marsh.*

drawn, he is obliged to distinguish between the *true* religion and the *established* religion: a distinction by which the Dissenters will probably feel more obliged than his own church.

This divine and his coadjutors will, however, allow us to read the Bible, provided we take the *Prayer-Book* with it, which is more than our Catholic guide will do; but then the latter offers his services as an *oral* instructor, which he considers as far more important. Perhaps, the clergy of both churches may so far be actuated by the same principle,—they are afraid to entrust us with the Bible *alone*, lest, perchance, it should not lead us into their communion.

Another modern writer says, “As an *interpreter* of the Bible, as an authorized teacher and instructor, the Church becomes the genuine source of Christian love and charity; thus ‘keeping the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace*:’ that is, if I understand this author, if we all say as the Church says, there will be no contradiction, and if no contradiction, no dispute; but where then is our Christian liberty?—where our right of free enquiry? Beside, if I am to be wholly led by the Church, or which is the same thing, by the *Prayer-Book*, and must always explain the Bible by the three Creeds and thirty-nine Articles, I had better give it up, and adhere to the latter only, without the trouble of comparing them. It is of no use to examine where we are not allowed to chuse. In saying this, however, I

* Claims of the Established Church, p. 72.

beg to explain, that my design is not to censure either the articles or creeds; but to contend for what every consistent Protestant must admit, that the authority of the Scriptures is paramount and supreme.

As to the Church of Rome, it is obviously absurd for her members, whose creed has been long since unalterably fixed by ecclesiastical authority, to talk of examining the reasonableness of their principles; and some, who have lately been so rash as to attempt it, have been very properly reprov'd. Catholics have no trouble in their religion,—but to believe implicitly, and to obey without enquiry.

On a late occasion, some British Catholics have been so misled by their feelings, and the display of their liberality, as to claim a right to judge of “the *reasonableness* of their belief:” for this they have been very properly reprov'd by one of their prelates, Bp. Milner, the Vicar Apostolic of the midland district, who peremptorily asserts, that “it is NOT the Catholic rule of faith that every individual should judge of the *reasonableness* of the different articles of faith; but he is to believe them on the *authority* of the Catholic church*!” But, blessed be God, we are Protestants, and our faith is not under the dominion of priests; nor are we amenable to any man, or set of men, for our opinions, but to God only; for he alone can judge with what seriousness and

* ‘Pastoral Instructions for Lent,’ by Dr. Milner, Bishop of Cantabala, and Vicar Apostolical of the Midland District. Dated Feb. 19, 1816.—See *Orthod. Journal*, Feb. 1816, p. 53.

diligence we have applied to the study of his will—how far we have improved the means afforded us to understand it—and with what simplicity and zeal we have sought his blessing and direction in the work.

In another instance (1813) some of the liberal members of this Roman communion, calling themselves the *English Catholic Board*, also so far forgot their duty, as to attempt the formation of a Society for the gratuitous distribution of the Scriptures in their *own* translation; but their prelates, always alive to the interests of the church, instantly took the alarm, and declared it necessary that *notes* should be added*, as *their* “authorized interpreter of the Scriptures.” At the same time, they obligingly hinted to their sister Church of England, that by such means she had signed her “death-warrant,” unless she should furnish each of her members with “a pair of church-of-England *spectacles*, to enable him to see clearly the thirty-nine articles in the sacred volume †.” But even this expedient of adding notes would not satisfy the zealous Bishop of Cantabala, before quoted. “The expedient (says he) is evidently inadequate to its intended purpose, since the Tridentine fathers make no distinction between Bibles in the vulgar tongue, *with notes* and *without notes*; and since it is evidently

* “Your proposal of printing the Rhemish translation of the New Testament, WITHOUT NOTE, would not have been agreeable to *our practice*, nor to the terms of the letter of pope Pius VI.” &c. — Bp. Poynter. — *Correspondence on the Formation of the Roman Catholic Bible Society*, p. 23.

† *Orthodox Journal*, 1814, p. 141.

IMPOSSIBLE to add ANY NOTES whatever to the sacred text, which will make it a SAFE and PROPER elementary book of instruction for the ILLITERATE POOR*.”

To deny, however, that we are to judge for ourselves in matters of religion, is to deny our accountability to our Maker, since we cannot be answerable for opinions not our own; and even they who take from us this responsibility, would surely tremble to answer for us at the great tribunal. Or if they were rash enough to do this, we are not weak enough to trust them; for we know that “EVERY ONE of US shall give an account of HIMSELF to God †.”

But, admitting it to be our duty to search the Scriptures, and judge for ourselves, some persons think that our *reason* is not to be employed in the examination. ‘When we come to the Bible (say they) we must bring our faith, and not our reason; we have nothing to do with the word of God, but to believe and obey it.’ Let us examine this.

1. The objector does not literally intend what he asserts. A man without reason is a maniac, or an idiot. If he indeed mean we are not to use our reason, he may as well say we must shut our eyes to meet the day-light. If God has given us reason, is it not a talent we are bound to employ and to improve? Or has he given us any talent to be “wrapped in a napkin,” and unemployed?

2. Supposing we could suspend our reason,

* Orthodox Journal, Oct. 1813. † Rom. xiv. 12.

we should also suspend our accountability, as before remarked, and withdraw ourselves from the moral government of God; for only rational beings are the subjects of that government, or capable of moral good and evil. We reduce ourselves—I will not say to a *level* with the brutes, for man, without reason, having far less sagacity, is to many of them far *inferior*.

3. It is only by the use of reason we can ascertain the divine authority of the Scriptures. How do we attempt to prove this? Do we not reason from historical testimony, from miracles, from prophecy, and from a variety of other topics, in their favour?—And can we reason *without* the use of reason? The very question shews its own absurdity.

4. It is by reason only that we can explain Scripture, otherwise fools and idiots would be the best interpreters. Does it not require the use of reason to examine the original text,—to compare parallel passages or various readings,—to ascertain doctrines, and deduce inferences? Away then with the cant of rejecting reason! To offer any argument that reason should be discarded, would be to reason *against* the use of reason.

But here we must make a distinction; for though we can understand *nothing* without the use of reason; yet I say not that we can understand *every* thing by it; or that reason is of itself able, either to comprehend the mysteries of the gospel, or to enter into its spirit: for “the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, neither can he know them, because

they are spiritually discerned*.” As in all the arts it requires a peculiar genius, taste, or turn of mind to discern, relish, and enjoy their respective beauties; so in religion, we must have a heart renewed by grace, and a mind imbued with divine truth to discern, esteem, and enjoy the peculiar doctrines of the gospel. The “carnal mind” of “the natural man” is attached wholly to terrestrial things, and absorbed in them. Without the aid of the Spirit of God, we can never enter fully into the spirit of the gospel.

Having ascertained our *right* to examine the Scriptures for ourselves, and shewn how far our *reason* may assist in the enquiry — let us now attend to the result.

We put the Bible into the hands of a simple layman, suppose, and we point him to the divine precept, — “Search the Scriptures.” Now this man will not read long, if he reads attentively, before he discovers that he is a sinner, obnoxious to the law of God; and hence arises the duty of confession, in order to forgiveness. “I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin †.” The same inspired word which convicts of sin points also to the Saviour, and recommends his as the only name given among men, “whereby we must be saved ‡.” This calls upon his gratitude; and not to confess this name before men, though at the peril of his life, is to endanger his own salvation. “He that denieth me before men

* 1 Cor. ii. 14.

† Ps. xxxvii. 5.

‡ Acts iv. 12.

(says our Lord) him will I also deny before my Father, which is in Heaven *." To enjoin upon such a man secrecy in his religion, is to require what is impossible in itself, impious toward God, and even cruel to our fellow-men. The convert finds himself in a situation like that of the *lepers* in Samaria, who discovered the treasures of a deserted camp. "We do not well," said they, while they enjoyed them alone: "this day is a day of good tidings and we hold our peace: if we tarry till the morning light, some mischief will come upon us. Now, therefore, come, that we may go and tell the king's household †." Such was unquestionably the conduct of the first disciples of our Lord. "Philip findeth Nathaniel, and saith unto him, We have found him of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son Joseph ‡." So also the woman of Sichar "left her water-pot and went her way into the city, and saith to the men, 'Come, see a man which told me all that ever I did: is not this the Christ §?'"

Had the primitive Christians been content to keep their religion to themselves, they might have defied persecutors; for, God be praised! tyrants cannot read the heart: but they considered this as an act of perfidy to the Saviour. Even after they were apprehended, great pains were sometimes taken to persuade them to recant and to conform; and had they been like many modern Christians, who see no harm in the rites of Jag-

* Matt. x. 33.

† 2 Kings vii. 9.

‡ John i. 45.

§ John iv. 28, 29.

gernaut, or Budha, and who make no scruple to assist in the devotions of a Roman mass or a Turkish mosque, they might easily have avoided all the horrors of persecution. It was but to cast a little incense upon the altar — to swear by the life of Cæsar,—or to reproach Christ, and they were free; but they had not so “learned Christ:”—they gloried in the cross, and counted all things but loss, dross, and refuse for the Saviour’s sake!

Upon these men it was of no use to enjoin silence: their hearts were full of love and gratitude to the Redeemer, and they spread everywhere the savour of his name; but the question here arises, Whether they had a right to do this, without permission of the magistrate, and knowing it would render them obnoxious to the laws? If, in a former Essay, I succeeded in proving that man has a right to worship God, it will certainly follow, that no one has authority to forbid him: and if I demonstrated, as I conceive I did, that rights and duties are inseparably connected, so that every man has a right to do his duty, — I may safely infer the right of free enquiry from the duty of investigation; and I do not expect that any person, who admits the latter, will dispute the former. The only matter of debate which can arise here is, Whether we have a right to communicate to others the result of our enquiries?—and this is a point so clear, as it respects religion, that it will scarcely admit of controversy—at least in this free country. Even Dr. *Paley* says, “Every species of intolerance,

which enjoins suppression and silence, and every species of persecution, which enforces such injunctions, is adverse to the progress of truth:" and to deny the right of discussion, is to deny the first and dearest of human rights, — the right of conscience; yea, to deny the right of God to the obedience of his creatures: and the tyrant who should attempt it, would imitate those Pagan Emperors, who assumed the attributes of the Supreme, and dared to mimic his lightning and his thunder!

But it requires consideration, in what *manner* we may express a difference in opinion from our superiors, and with what caution we should oppose the dogmas of an established faith. With a grave face, a modest countenance, and a respectful bow, we may *presume* to differ, and even humbly intimate the reasons of our difference. Yes; says Dr. Paley, "I tolerate all books of serious argumentation: but I deem it no infringement of religious liberty, to restrain the circulation of ridicule, invective, and mockery upon religious subjects*." Mighty well this, if both parties were conformed to the same rule! but this will not do. A downy Dean may sit at his ease, and write a "Tale of a Tub," or any other tale that ridicules the fundamental truths of the reformation;—or a Doctor of Divinity may write Notes on Hudibras, and make a mock of divine influences, so that he do not attack the church, by which he is maintained. I am not an advocate for levity on religious topics; but I see no

* Paley's Moral Phil. vol. ii. p. 337. 19th edit.

reason why it should be allowed on one side, and prohibited on the other:— why a Butler or a Swift shall be permitted to burlesque vital and practical religion, and a Robinson or a Ringle-tub must not touch a rite or a ceremony, — a lawn sleeve, or even a surplice. Yes, I retract:— I *do* see a reason. Truth and Piety are invulnerable; but human inventions and traditions tremble at the breath of Ridicule! — and some persons seem to know this.

But to oppose the religion of the State, it may be said, is to affront the government, and to insult the established authorities. Far be it from me to plead in favour of ribaldry and profaneness; but I esteem the rights of conscience sacred, and the freedom of the press inviolable. It was under such pretences as the above, that Archbishop Laud restrained our liberties in the reign of Charles I. “The Queen and the Roman Catholics must not be insulted; and therefore all offensive passages, such as calling the Pope *Anti-christ*, the Church of Rome *no true Church*, and every thing tending to expose images in churches, crucifixes, penance, auricular confession, and popish absolution, must be expunged*,” — as being, no doubt, “ridicule, invective, and mockery on religious subjects.”

Farther, It may be enquired, Shall men be allowed to affront Christianity itself?— and to attack the Christian religion by calumnies and reproaches? It is indeed much to be lamented that they should do so. Still, however, let the

* Neale's Puritans, vol. ii. p. 172.

press be open ; and let it be left to the discretion of a British jury, whether the offence be such an outrage of propriety and decency, as to require the correction of the law, as in the instance of libels against public or private characters. It is to be remarked, however, that the cases are not exactly parallel : “ Calumny and slander, when affecting our fellow-men, are punishable by law, for this plain reason,—because an injury is done, and a damage sustained, and a reparation therefore due to the injured party ; yet this reason cannot hold where God and the Redeemer are concerned, who can sustain no injury from low malice, or scurrilous invective ; nor can any reparation be made to them by temporal penalties*.” Indeed, where God only is concerned, the judgment may be safely referred to himself. “ Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord, and I will repay it.” Even blasphemy, I apprehend, can only come under the cognizance of our laws, as it is an offence against society, and tends to deprave the public morals.

Again, Is not religious controversy attended with danger and inconvenience? Most undoubtedly. Let us not dissemble, but meet the objection fairly. When weak minds, unqualified to reason and too indolent to enquire, are assaulted by specious errors, and especially, when those errors flatter the pride and corruption of the human heart, they are often led astray ; and when once they have embraced error, the natural indolence and obstinacy of such persons often

* Furneaux's Letters to Blackstone, 2nd ed. p.38.

closes their ears and their hearts against truth. They will not be charmed, though the charmer charm ever so wisely. They have once enquired, perhaps, or at least others for them, and it is enough: they are satisfied, and will not suffer their quiet to be disturbed by arguments, either from Scripture or from reason. They love the torpor of repose; and, like the benumbed traveller in the polar regions, will sooner sit down and sleep the sleep of death than rouse themselves to encounter the difficulties which attend investigation. But shall Christians shrink from difficulties and dangers to indulge inglorious ease? Do men of the world act thus? Do merchants resign commerce because of the dangers of the seas? — Or travellers give up their enterprises on account of the inconveniences of journeying? Did Bruce, or Park, or Campbell act thus? Ah! no. “The children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light.” In all such cases dangers only excite to greater energy.

Nor is controversy in general, or religious controversy in particular, so much to be dreaded as many religious persons apprehend. “There is no learned man,” says our immortal Milton, “but will confess he hath much profited by reading controversies: his senses awakened, his judgment sharpened, and the truth which he holds more firmly established. If then it be profitable for him to read, why should it not, at least, be tolerable and free for his adversary to write? In logic they teach, that contraries laid together more evidently appear: it follows then, that all controversy being permitted, falsehood will appear

more false, and truth the more true; which must needs conduce much, not only to the confounding of Popery, but to the general confirmation of unimplicit truth*.”

“However some may affect,” says Mr. Hall, “to dread controversy, it can never be of ultimate disadvantage to the interests of truth, or the happiness of mankind. Where it is indulged in its full extent, a multitude of ridiculous opinions will, no doubt, be obtruded upon the public; but any ill influence they may produce cannot continue long, as they are sure to be opposed with at least equal ability, and that superior advantage which is ever attendant on truth. The colours with which wit or eloquence may have adorned a false system, will gradually die away, sophistry be detected, and every thing estimated at length, according to its true value. Publications besides, like every thing else that is human, are of a mixed nature, where truth is often blended with falsehood, and important hints suggested in the midst of much impertinent or pernicious matter; nor is there any way of separating the precious from the vile, but tolerating the whole. Where the right of unlimited enquiry is exerted, the human faculties will be upon the advance; where it is relinquished, they will be of necessity at a stand, and will probably decline.

“If we have recourse to experience, that kind of enlarged experience, in particular, which history furnishes, we shall not be apt to entertain

* ‘Of True Religion, Heresy, Schism,’ &c. *Prose Works of Milton*, vol. iv, p. 269.

any violent alarm at the greatest liberty of discussion: we shall there see that to this we are indebted for those improvements in arts and sciences which have meliorated, in so great a degree, the condition of mankind. The Middle Ages, as they are called, the darkest period of which we have any particular accounts, were remarkable for two things—the extreme ignorance that prevailed, and an excessive veneration for received opinions, — circumstances which, having been always united, operate on each other, it is plain, as cause and effect. The whole compass of science was in those times subject to restraint; every new opinion was looked upon as dangerous. To affirm the globe we inhabit to be round, was deemed heresy; and for asserting its motion the immortal Galileo was confined in the prisons of the Inquisition. Yet, it is remarkable, so little are the human faculties fitted for restraint, that its utmost vigour was never able to affect a thorough unanimity, or to preclude the most alarming discussions and controversies. . . . [And] dangerous as free enquiry may have been looked upon, when extended to the principles of religion, there is no department where it was more necessary, or its interference more decidedly beneficial. By nobly daring to exert it, when all the powers on earth were combined in its suppression, did Luther accomplish that reformation which drew forth primitive Christianity, long hidden and concealed under a load of abuses, to the view of an awakened and astonished world. So great is the force of truth, when it has once gained the attention, that all the arts and policy of the court of

Rome, aided, throughout every part of Europe, by a veneration for antiquity, the prejudices of the vulgar, and the cruelty of despots, were fairly baffled and confounded by the opposition of a solitary monk: and had this principle of free enquiry been permitted, in succeeding times, to have full scope, Christianity would at this period have been much much better understood, and the animosity of sects considerably abated*.”— So far this elegant and convincing writer.

But we have higher authority than Milton and Mr. Hall. A great part of St. Paul's writings are controversial; and nearly the same may be said of the writings of the other apostles. In opposing the false prophets and heresiarchs of the time, they have taught us, both by precept and example, to “contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints;” in which words are described, both the nature and the object of their zeal, which indeed were worthy of each other. They *contended earnestly*, like the wrestlers and combatants in the Olympic games, and even risked their lives in the contention; and the object was worthy of the risk. It was FOR the *faith*, the *truth*, the *gospel* of our Saviour; for these Christians did not contend for trifles, as did their successors, in the following centuries. We see in St. Paul's epistles, the tolerance, the forbearance, the affection, enjoined toward all who loved the Lord Jesus in sincerity; but when any apostatized from the truth, and renounced the fundamental principles of the gospel, then how altered

* Hall's Apology for the Freedom of the Press, 3d ed. p. 3—7.

is his language! They were no more considered as brethren, when once they turned their backs upon the Saviour, either by offering indignity to his person, or by shewing a practical contempt of his authority.

This leads me to notice the fashionable hypothesis of the *innocency* of mental error. That there are a thousand shades in the criminality of errors,—that therefore some are *comparatively* innocent — and that vice is the worst of heresies, I most cordially admit; but it will not therefore follow, that error is in no case criminal.

Errors in fact and in philosophy are only censurable as they may arise from indolence, or neglect of the means of information; but these are not the errors condemned in the Scriptures, which have always a reference to revealed truth; yet even these, when they arise from unavoidable ignorance of that revelation, the means of knowledge not being within our reach, will hardly be severely scrutinized. “The times of ignorance God winked at;” for he requires not the exercise of talents he has not bestowed—“he does not gather where he has not strewed.” Where, however, he has sent the Scriptures, and on points on which those Scriptures are express and full, and especially on such as concern the great essentials of the gospel, and affect the vitals of practical religion, error grows to heresy—and even to damnable heresy—in those who “deny the Lord that bought them, and put him to an open shame.” Indeed, the worst consequences of heresy are its practical effects, degrading the Saviour, blaspheming the Holy Spirit, perverting the way of

salvation, or debasing the moral purity of truth ; in all which cases, as it becomes painfully necessary to make an excision of the member, the body of Christ, that is, the church, is maimed thereby ; so that the sinfulness of error is always in proportion to its moral importance in the Christian system, and to the perspicuity of the revelation from which it deviates*.

It may be said of some points of revelation, as of the prophetic oracle, they are so conspicuous that *they that run may read them* † —alluding, as I conceive, to the hand-posts which pointed the manslayer to the city of Refuge : but while he that run might read, he that dreamed along the way, regardless of these way-marks, might pass them, unobserved, and fall a victim to his own folly and inattention.

The Lord hath also graciously promised his Holy Spirit, to guide into *all the truth* those who humbly seek his aid, with a disposition to embrace whatever he may be pleased explicitly to reveal. It is, therefore, not an unfair inference, that when persons reject what are evidently the great first principles of the gospel, they have not thus sought the promised aid, and therefore have little ground to plead their innocence in this

* There has been some difficulty in drawing the line of difference between *heresy* and *schism*. My opinion of the former I have ventured to give in a note to Mr. Fuller's Essay on Truth, which he saw and approved (*Vide* "Dictionary of Religions," p. 4, 5); and Schism, I think, differed chiefly in the cause of the division arising from a non-essential point of difference. The chief evil of the former lay in the magnitude of the error which caused the separation; of the latter, in making a separation without a sufficient cause.

† Hab. ii. 2.

matter. Indeed, so far from seeking this aid, it is the general opinion of those who reject these doctrines, that such aids were peculiar to the first age of Christianity, and therefore are not now to be sought, or expected, although the promise of their continuance is "for ever." And where there is an extreme aversion to certain revealed truths, as humiliating, unpalatable, or inconsistent with our notions of divine truth, *à priori*, as to what it ought to be, though we are not called upon to pronounce upon their state, we cannot help feeling anxiety on their account. The Scriptures represent such "as aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenant of promise;" and consequently,—not entitled to communion with the church, as "fellow-citizens with the saints." But we are not to pre-judge their final state. To their own Master must they stand or fall; and he only who reads the heart, is able to reward every man according to his works.

Let us next enquire into the lawful "*weapons* of this warfare." We have already rejected the "carnal weapons" of the civil power, and leave them, with those of military warfare, to the consummation of the everlasting fire: but there are weapons which are carnal, beside those of the magistrate; namely, reproach, calumny, and abuse; and indeed, some of these are not only carnal but *infernal*; for Satan is distinctly characterized as the "father of lies," and "the accuser of the brethren:" and so utterly do I detest and abhor these diabolical instruments of controversy, that not all the splendor of Luther's zeal, or of

Milton's genius, can reconcile me to them. Even Ridicule, though in some cases unquestionably lawful, is of that equivocal nature that we may say of it as St. Paul says of the law—It is “good if a man use it lawfully;” but thus to manage it requires much care and prudence. It is greatly to be regretted that some valuable treatises, in defence of evangelical truth, of the last century, are so interlarded with personal invective, that they are become obsolete by that circumstance. However we may listen to reproach on *living* authors, when we have reason to believe that they are translated to the skies, we can no longer bear to hear their character depreciated and reviled. Ridicule should be used like the surgeon's knife,—not for the sake of cutting, but of cure.

But the proper dialect for polemics is what St. Paul calls “Sound speech, which cannot be condemned*.” Our language should be explicit and decided; but it should also be temperate and modest. “Soft words and hard arguments” are the best weapons of the Christian controversialist. The language may be healing, though the argument, to use a technical term, should *bite*. But we need not wonder at the frequent use of bitter language, when we consider how much it agrees with the general temper of mankind. Railing is also so much easier than reasoning, both in its use and apprehension, that we cannot be surprized at its being so often employed. Readers, in general, prefer it as much as writers. The Scriptures, however, enjoin us not to render

* Titus ii. 8.

“ Railing for railing ;” but to “ speak the truth in love” that so we may convince gainsayers*.

Yet while I maintain the propriety, the expediency, and even the necessity in many cases, of religious controversy, I would be far from recommending a controversial *spirit*. So, in another case, though no man is to be censured for claiming the protection of the law against real injuries, yet a litigious spirit is always treated with reprobation and contempt. To contradict, for the pleasure of contradicting, does not discover the temper of a Christian ; and to be always seeking fuel for this flame, in the weakness of our brethren, or the inadvertence of our ministers, so as to make a man offender for a word, is highly censurable. Indeed, I fear that most of the subjects of ecclesiastical dispute have been either presumptuous and profane, or trifling and ridiculous. Under the former class, I include the metaphysical subtleties of the school-men, on the nature of the divine Being, of angels, and the human soul ; and under the latter, the endless disputes about rites and ceremonies, and clerical vestments †. But these are like the sports of children in the market-place, saying to each other,

* On the subject of religious controversy I would recommend No. 19, of the Letters of Omicron, by the late excellent Mr. Newton. *Works*, vol. I.

† This seems to be one of the most trifling of all controversies, and it must, to be sure, make churchmen smile to read the weighty objections of Non-cons to these clerical garbs, and to see their descendants, not only wear them, but earnest in their defence. On the other hand, Dissenters avenge themselves, by remarking the zeal with which some clergymen trace their divine right very accurately up to—the great — of Babylon!

“We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned unto you, and ye have not wept*.”

Controversy, on the doctrines of Christianity, naturally tends to the diligent and minute investigation of the Scriptures:—it leads to accuracy of thinking and speaking on divine subjects, and inspires a deeper sense of the importance of the great and leading truths of Christianity. These effects have, in many instances, resulted from the important writings of our Reformers, at the time of the grand secession from Popery,—from the labours of those eminent divines, who conducted the Socinian and Trinitarian controversies in the two last centuries, and more recently from the deep and masterly discussions of Presidents Edwards and Witherspoon, Doctors Doddridge and Erskine, and the late excellent Andrew Fuller, who, with a clear and accurate statement of the doctrines of Revelation, tenaciously maintained their practical influence in favour of a holy life.

Respecting the final result of Theological Controversy, I have no apprehensions. “Great is the truth and will prevail.” Truth, like light, is elicited by friction, even from the most unpromising materials. No man would expect fire from a flint who had not seen it struck. Out of disputes which have appeared most uninteresting, have sometimes arisen discoveries the most important; and when once truth has dawned, its path is like that of the just, increasing to the

* Luke vii. 32

perfect day. Whether indeed perfect unanimity of sentiment be attainable in the present world is doubtful, since it can only be founded on equality of knowledge; for while one man has more knowledge than another, it seems unavoidably to follow, that his opinions will be more correct. Moreover, in a world where candour, modesty, and forbearance, are reckoned among the virtues, some differences of opinion seem necessary for their exercise; so that I am doubtful whether perfect unanimity of sentiment will take place in the church of Christ, until the virtues of the present state shall be exchanged for the sublimer graces of the celestial and eternal world.

ESSAY IV.

On the Spiritual Nature of Christ's Kingdom.

“If Christ be our King, let us shew ourselves subjects to him alone, in the great affair of Conscience and eternal Salvation.” — *Bishop Hoadley.*

I BEG leave to make a distinction here, which is of importance in this discussion. If I contemplate Jesus Christ abstractedly, as the Son of God and the Governor of the world, I ascribe to him all power both in heaven and earth. “He is King of kings and Lord of lords;” but when I consider him as King in Zion, and the Head of his church, I am authorized, by his own words,

to say, that his "kingdom is *not* of this world *;" he assumes no secular authority, nor does he interfere with any of the political governments upon earth. His spiritual reign in the church is perfectly distinct from the dominion of his Providence in the world. Ignorance, or inattention to this circumstance, led to the errors of the early German Anabaptists, and the Fifth Monarchy Men of the 17th century, who, from a presumption that he was about to assume a temporal reign, offered to commence it for him, and in his name. There is no sect of the present age, however, so far as I know, thus presumptuous; at least, they are content to wait till the Millenium:—a mysterious period, which it is not necessary for us at present to consider.

When Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world," his first object appears to have been to deny its interference with the authority of Cæsar, or his deputies. His kingdom was not secular or temporal, and therefore did not implicate him in treason against the state, as had been pretended. 2dly, In its erection, it exhibited no more of the pomp than of the power of the world,—it came not with observation; that is, not with outward show or splendor†; nor did it afford worldly

* John xviii. 36.

† Μετα παρατηρησεως, Luke xvii. 20.—But could Pilate have foreseen that the pretended successor of this Jesus would have worn a triple crown, and have taken upon him to appoint and dethrone kings and emperors, what would he have said? Jesus himself, however, made no such pretensions;—his "kingdom is not of this world"—an expression which implies more than it expresses, namely, that it is of a character distinct and different from all worldly empires; in short, as stated above, that it is spiritual, and that his reign is in the hearts of men.

gratifications or enjoyments ; it consisted “ not in meat and drink, but in righteousness, and peace, and joy, in the Holy Ghost * :”—a circumstance that I fear has not been attended to by all those who deny its secularity. —3dly, The kingdom of Christ is not of the world, as *he* was not of the world † ; but is purely spiritual: he hath a throne in the heart of every true Christian ; and vain are all pretensions to discipleship, while the heart is unsubdued by grace. He is also King of the Church, and there his reign is no less spiritual and sublime. The influence of Christ, in his saints and in his church, is like the power of attraction in nature,—it affects not only planets and their satellites, but every particle of matter in them, down to the primitive atoms of creation. It keeps all in motion, and each in its proper sphere. The same Spirit which humbles the heart of a convinced sinner, raises the devotion of the saint, directs the worship of a little society on earth, and inspires that of the glorious company of “ the church of the first-born in Heaven.”

But to return to our more immediate subject. If Jesus himself assumed no temporal power, he could confer none ; and this indeed he very explicitly declared, in forbidding his disciples in any case to exercise it. “ The princes of the Gentiles exercise authority over them, but it shall not be so with you ; if any man will be chief, let him be the servant ‡ ;”—that is, emulate each other in labours and in suffering, but usurp no authority ;

* Rom. xiv.17. † John xvii. 16. ‡ Matt. xx. 25—27.

and not only are ministers, yea, apostles, prohibited from usurping temporal authority, but Christians are forbidden to obey them. He that hath said, "Be ye not called Rabbi, for one is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren," the same hath also said, "Call no man your father upon earth, for one is your Father, who is in heaven*."

As our Lord has not allowed his *ministers* to assume any authority over the consciences of his disciples, much less has he granted it to *magistrates*, who receive not their commission from the Mediator, but ultimately from God, the Judge and Governor of the world. Indeed, magistrates, *as such*, have no place in Christ's church; their office has no immediate connection with it; they are the servants of the state. Their kingdom *is* of this world, and if admitted into the Christian church, as the spiritual subjects of grace (as many happily have been) they must leave their *regalia* at the door. *There* is but one Master, who will admit no partner — no competitor.

One of our Lord's parables seems also particularly directed against the exercise of improper methods of promoting Christianity, or of rooting up heresy. I refer to that of the Wheat and Tares, in which the officious servants proposed to root out the tares from among the wheat; but the Lord said, "Nay; lest ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest †."

But more completely and effectually to ex-

* Matt. xxiii. 8, 9. † Matt. xiii. 29, 30.

clude all pretence to the right of persecution, he repressed the first appearance of an assuming, domineering, or persecuting temper. Of this we have the following remarkable instance:— When the sons of Zebedee would have called fire from Heaven (as Elias formerly had done) to destroy those whom they judged the enemies of their divine Master, he turned and rebuked them sharply, saying, “Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of; for the Son of man is not come to destroy men’s lives, but to save them*.” Here it is clearly ascertained that the spirit of persecution is not the spirit of Christ, nor of the gospel; on the contrary, Christians are enjoined to pray for them that “persecute, or despitely use them;” and Jesus himself set them the great example, when he prayed for his murderers, while bleeding on the cross. That the church of Christ ought not to persecute is indeed so clear, that even Roman Catholics themselves admit it; and therefore mingle their cruelty with hypocrisy. When their church condemns a heretic, she always delivers him up to the civil power, that the priest’s garments be not stained with blood; and, in some cases, she hypocritically recommends the temporal power to shew mercy to the culprit †, though she is sufficiently careful lest any should be shewn;—of which, indeed, I believe there is no instance, though the temporal magistrate has often shuddered at being thus made the tool of the church and of the clergy.

But the great plea, in defence of the civil

* Luke ix. 54. † Chandler’s Hist. of Persecution, p. 284.

power interfering in religion, and indeed the only one which requires a moment's hesitation, is derived from the Old Testament Dispensation, where we find "kings, as kings, at the head of the church, and defenders of the faith, maintaining religion by secular authority," and punishing idolatry and blasphemy, as sins against the state. As this argument is ably and candidly discussed by Mr. Locke, I shall present the reader with a citation from his works. "The case of idolaters (says Mr. L.) in respect of the Jewish commonwealth, falls under a double consideration. The first is of those, who, being initiated into the Mosaical rites, and made citizens of that commonwealth, did afterwards apostatize from the worship of the God of Israel. These were proceeded against as traitors and rebels, guilty of no less than high treason; for the commonwealth of the Jews, different in that from all others, was an absolute Theocracy,"—that is, God himself was the supreme Magistrate and Legislator; "nor was there, nor could there be any difference between the commonwealth and the church. The laws established there, concerning the worship of one invisible Deity, were the civil laws of that people, and a part of their political government, in which God himself was the Legislator. Now, if any one can shew me (continues this able writer) where there is a commonwealth at this time constituted upon that foundation, I will acknowledge that ecclesiastical laws do there unavoidably become a part of the civil; and that the subjects of that government both may and ought to be kept in strict conformity with that church, by the

civil power : but there is absolutely no such thing under the gospel as a Christian commonwealth. There are, indeed, many cities and kingdoms that have embraced the faith of Christ, but they have retained their ancient form of government, with which the law of Christ hath not at all meddled. He, indeed, hath taught men how, by faith and good works, they may attain eternal life; but he instituted no commonwealth,—he prescribed unto his followers no new and peculiar form of government,—nor put he the sword into any magistrate's hand, with commission to make use of it, in forcing men to forsake their former religion, and receive his.

“2dly, Foreigners, and such as were strangers to the commonwealth of Israel, were not compelled by force to observe the rites of the Mosaical law; but, on the contrary, in the very same place where it is ordered that an Israelite that was an idolater should be put to death, there it is provided that strangers should not be vexed, nor oppressed*. . . . God being in a peculiar manner the King of the Jews, he could not suffer the adoration of any other deity, which was properly an act of high treason against himself, in the land of Canaan, which was his kingdom; for such a manifest revolt could no ways consist with his dominion, which was perfectly political, in that country. All idolatry was therefore to be rooted out of the bounds of his kingdom, because it was an acknowledgment of another god, that is to say, another king, against the laws of [his]

* Exod. xxii. 20, 21.

empire. . . . But though all idolatry was thus rooted out of the land of Canaan, yet every idolater was not brought to execution. The whole family of Rahab, the whole nation of the Gibeonites, articed with Joshua, and were allowed by treaty: and there were many captives among the Jews, who were idolaters. David and Solomon subdued many countries without the confines of of the land of promise, and carried their conquests as far as Euphrates. Amongst so many captives taken, so many nations reduced unto their obedience, we find not one man forced into the Jewish religion, and the worship of the true God, and punished for idolatry, though all of them were certainly guilty of it*.”

So far Mr. Locke, but as it would be utterly inconsistent with the principle of this Essay, to rest on the authority of names, however respectable, I shall take the liberty to compare Mr. Locke's assertions, with the sacred records of those times (the only admissable authority in this case) and to confirm or correct his statement, as I may find it necessary.

1. That the Hebrew government was originally a *Theocracy* is, I conceive, very evident. *Josephus*, speaking of the various existing governments in his time, remarks, “Some governments are committed to a single person, others to a certain number of select men, and others again to all the people in general; but our lawgiver (says he) has declared that ours shall be a *Theocracy*, and has ascribed all rule and sovereign

* Letter on Toleration, p. 79—84.

power to God alone* :” — but we must go higher than Josephus. The original contract between God and his chosen people states the matter thus : “ Now, therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people ; for all the earth is mine : and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation †.” So again, at a later period, “ The Lord’s portion is his people, Jacob is the lot of his inheritance.” And as Jehovah took this nation for his peculiar people, so were they to take him alone as their God and King. “ I am the Lord thy God, — thou shalt have no other God before me.” In consistency with this principle, the government was to be administered by Moses and Aaron, and their successors, as servants of the God of Israel ; and when a case of peculiar difficulty occurred the *Urim* and *Thummim* were to be consulted ; and, being considered as the immediate answer of Heaven to their enquiries, to be implicitly obeyed. Even in the case anticipated, that they should be discontented and require a temporal prince over them (as actually came to pass) they were commanded to submit to no other king than Jehovah himself should appoint : — “ Thou shalt in any wise set him to be king over thee which the Lord thy God shall chuse ‡ ; and thence, when David was exalted to the throne, he very frequently addressed Jehovah as *his* King, as King of Israel and King in Zion § :—“ Let Israel

* *Contra Apion*, lib. 2. † Exod. xix, 5, 6. ‡ Deut. xvii. 15.
§ Ps. xliv. 4; lxxiv. 12; lxxxix. 18.

rejoice in him that made him ; let the children of Zion be joyful in *their* king*.” Now, if Jehovah was indeed the supreme Govenor, then was the acknowledgement and worship of any other god an act of treason and rebellion, attended with some circumstances of peculiar aggravation, as they had not exalted him to the throne, but received from him the very country in which they lived, as his donation :—“ The land which the Lord thy God giveth thee †.”

But, 2dly, Though it must be admitted that the law which punished idolatry with death was peculiar to the Jews, as being a part of the Mosaic Code, and could extend no farther than the promised land, I cannot admit that idolatry was openly tolerated to any persons in the land of Israel, either slaves or captives ‡. Whatever forms of devotion indeed were secretly used could not come under the cognizance of the magistrate ; but the use of graven images, and idolatrous sacrifices, is, in no instance that I can find, permitted. Certain it is, that Rahab did not contract for such indulgence, for she believed in the God of Israel §. The Gibeonites also professed faith

* Ps. cxlix. 2.

† On the Theocracy consult Warburton's *Divine Legation* ; Lowman's *Hebrew Government*, chap. i. and xii ; Dr. Erskine's *Dissertations*, Diss. I. Prof. Verschuir's *Orat.* translation by Birt. 1812 ; See also Hos. xiii. 10 ; Judges viii. 23 ; 1 Sam. xii. 12 ; 2 Chron. ix. 8.

‡ “ In the land of Israel we are commanded to persecute it [idolatry] until it be destroyed out of all our land : but *without* the land we are not commanded to persecute it ; but every place that we shall subdue, we are to destroy all the idolatry that is therein.”

Maimonides in Misn. Of Idolatry, ch. vii. sect. 1.

§ Josh. ii. 9 ; Heb. xi. 31.

in him; and as they were appointed, though in a menial capacity, to wait upon the altar, it is most unlikely that they should either desire, or be permitted, to worship idols*. Nor can I find any such practice allowed, either to bond or free.

Neither would I say any thing to countenance idolatry, even among the pagan nations. It was a sin against the light of nature, and as we well know generally connected with practices the most criminal, in a moral point of view. The grossest impurities were consecrated, by incorporating them in their religious services, accompanied with human sacrifices; and these were certainly among the crimes for which the Canaanites were destroyed, and their country given to the children of Israel.

It does not appear that idolatry was punished capitally under the patriarchal dispensation; at least there is but one passage cited to this effect, which has probably a very different import. It is an expression of Job, in justifying himself from the suspicion of his accusers:—"If I beheld the sun when it shined, or the moon walking in brightness, and my heart hath been secretly enticed, and my mouth hath kissed my hand; this also were an iniquity *to be punished by* the Judge; for I should have denied the God that is above †." The remarkable supplement required to the original (*viz. to be punished by †*) has induced many of the best Hebrew critics to give a very

* Josh. ix. 9, 27.

† Job xxxi. 26—28.

‡ Long supplementary supplies in the version (which our translators have had the candour to print in *italic*) always raise suspicions of its correctness. Were I to suggest a supply here, it should be the

different translation; but admitting the propriety of the common version, it seems most natural to consider God himself as the Judge here intended, since the sin referred to is said to be of a secret nature; and the construction, both of the argument and of the poetry, strongly supports this interpretation. "For I should have denied the God that is above," and therefore have fallen justly under his reproof. Indeed, God is the only Judge which the patriarch acknowledged, being himself the supreme magistrate in the land of Uz*.

But though I can discover no instance of idolatry being *capitally* punished by the patriarchs, who were the magistrates of those times; yet I doubt not but those who were truly pious and conscientious, discouraged and opposed it, restraining, as much as possible, its pernicious influence on the morals of society. In the early ages, there seems to have been a proneness to idolatry, which it is very difficult to account for. Laban, though he acknowledged JEHOVAH as the true God, had his images (or *teraphim*) to which,

preposition *before* (*lepeni*) which, I think, might be justified — "It were an iniquity BEFORE my Judge" — *i. e.* in the sight of God: and to this sense the best modern commentators generally incline. Michaelis, however, renders the expression, "Even he, my Judge, is eyeing me, or it," — referring to 1 Sam. xviii. 9 (*Mich. in Lowth, Præl.*) and Mr. Good, in his new version, considers *Pelilim* (ver. 11) as referring to the reasoning (literally *judging*) powers of the human mind, — "This would be a profligacy of the understanding," — which agrees with the version of St. Jerom, *iniquitas maxima*, the grossest iniquity. But it would be too tedious to recite all the opinions of the critics, on a passage of so much difficulty.

* See chap. i. 3; ix. 15; xxiii. 7.

if he did not offer religious worship openly, he appears to have paid a superstitious respect in secret: and even his daughter Rachel, though married to a servant of the true God, appears to have had such an attachment to them, that she risked the displeasure, both of her father and her husband, to secure them*. It is supposed that they might be used as *talismans*; and it is possible that she might hope to receive some advantage from them in bearing children, in which, however, she was woefully disappointed. This conduct seems almost incredible and unaccountable, till we look nearer home, where we find even intelligent and religious persons, under the far more enlightened dispensation of Christianity, paying a respect of the same objectionable nature to crucifixes and sacred pictures; and among Protestants, who bitterly condemn the superstitions of Popery, we see an attachment to charms, to mystical or lucky numbers, and to astrological and other fancies, quite as silly as that of Rachel and her father to the *teraphim*. But those who attempt to justify their own folly by these early examples, as some do, should recollect that Jacob buried all his family idols, before he dared to see the face of God at Bethel †.

So far, however, from idolatry being then punished with death, it does not appear to have been subject to any civil penalty, before the establishment of the Theocracy, nor beyond the boundary of that peculiar government; from which the just and natural inference seems to be,

* See chap. i. 3; ix. 15; xxiii. 7.

† Gen. xxxv. 1—8.

that the temporal penalty ceased, with the law by which it was enacted,—the crime fell again under the judgment of that Supreme Being whom it offended, as the God of nature and of the world. The Gentile magistrates, of course, who derived no authority from the Mosaic law, could not be authorized to punish idolatry, nor indeed had they an idea of such a crime. On the contrary, their charge against the Christians was, that they were Atheists, because they refused the worship of their idols.

It has been inferred by some, from St. Paul's description of the office of the civil magistrate, as "a terror to evil doers," that it was his duty to punish every "evil work," and consequently idolatry; but in no such case is this sin either mentioned or alluded to: and when the Roman magistrate, Gallio, enumerates the crimes which fell under his cognizance, he comprises them under the two heads of injustice and wicked lewdness. Moreover, when St. Paul enjoined obedience to civil rulers, Nero was on the imperial throne; and it could hardly be the apostle's design to point the Christians to him, as the judge and punisher of idolatry; although it must be admitted, that at this period his character was not fully developed, as the monster which he afterwards became.

To return to the Jewish law. Not only idolatry, but *blasphemy* was also a capital offence; and those who have pleaded for punishing Roman Catholics, under the law against idolatry, have contended also for the same penalty against Socinians, on the charge of blasphemy: but it is

evident that this law was not derived from the patriarchal times, because when the son of the Egyptian (who is the first offender) was guilty of this crime, Moses himself knew not what to do with him, till he consulted JEHOVAH, from whom this oracle was received:—"Whosoever curseth his God shall bear his sin; and he that blasphemeth the name of JEHOVAH shall surely be put to death*:" but as this sacred name is not mentioned in the record of his crime †, it has been doubted whether the Egyptian went so far. The crime is, however, as I conceive, to be read in the punishment; and that the sacred name was not mentioned in the charge, might possibly arise from the accuser trembling to recite it in such a connection, and on such an occasion. So conscientious persons sometimes scruple to repeat the profane expressions of wicked men, even when necessary to the purposes of public justice.

If the criminal laws of the Jews continue in force, it remains to be considered by what authority we change the penalty; for it is presumed no one wishes to inflict the punishment of death, much less of stoning; but idolatry and blasphemy were both subject to this penalty, without

* Levit. xxiv. 16.

† The original only says, "He blasphemed the NAME, and cursed. The supplementary words [of the LORD] being supplied by our translators, as should seem, without sufficient authority; for, as Dr. A. Clarke remarks, of all the MSS. collected by Kennicott and De Rossi, *not one*, either of the Hebrew or Samaritan, has the word JEHOVAH in this place. Not one of the ancient versions, Targum of Onkelos, Hebræ-Samaritan, Samaritan version, Syriac, Arabic, Septuagint, or Vulgate Latin, has even attempted to supply the sacred name.—*Comment in Lev. xxix. 11.*

room for repentance in them; or reprieve, commutation, or pardon, in the judge.

Yet supposing that the Jewish laws on these subjects were now in force, they would not apply to support the cause of religious persecution. "The vast distance there is between *idolatry* (says Dr. John Owen) and any errors whatsoever, as merely such, however propagated or maintained with obstinacy, much impaireth the strength of this argumentation. The like to this may be said concerning *blasphemy*. Blasphemy, in the Scripture, is never taken in any place, that I can remember, for a man's maintaining his own error; but for his reviling and speaking evil of the truth, which he receiveth not; and so Paul, before his conversion, was a blasphemer*." I confess the Doctor does not carry his objections to this Jewish argument to the length I think they should be carried. However criminal the idolatry of Papists may be, in the sight of God, yet as they profess to direct all their worship *ultimately* to the supreme Being (and we cannot search the heart) and to reverence the true God, I do not think the Mosaic law could be applied to them, were it even now in force: so, as to the

* Dr. Owen farther remarks:—

"The penal constitutions of the Judaical policy, for so they were, (which yet I urge not) concerning idolaters, must be stretched beyond their limits, if you intend to inwrap heretics within their verge. If heretics be also idolaters, as the Papists, I say then the case seems to me to have received so considerable an alteration, that the plea of forbearance is extremely weakened, as to my present apprehension. However, for the present, I remove from such debate." — See *Owen on Toleration*,— *Sermons and Tracts*, fol. p. 291—3.

Socinians, however our feelings may be hurt, by the irreverent manner in which they too often speak of our Saviour, I can by no means charge them with violating the Jewish law on blasphemy. I believe they act from conviction, and do not intentionally degrade Jesus Christ below what *they* consider to be his true character; though I cannot but strongly censure the manner in which they sometimes write and speak. The subject is to grave for levity; and I would alike censure those on both sides the controversy, who can indulge in ridicule and reproach on topics so closely connected with salvation and eternal life. That the Jews themselves did not apply the law on blasphemy to mental error, is, I conceive, sufficiently clear from the case of the Sadducees, who, though they were Materialists, and denied the resurrection and a future state (errors certainly of no small importance) were not even expelled from the service of the temple, in which all the Jewish sects regularly met to worship*.

* The following striking passage is quoted (with approbation) by Dr. Erskine (Theolog. Dissert. p. 68.) from Dr. Increase Mather's Life, published by his Son at Boston, 1724. "He [Dr. I. M.] became sensible, that the example of the Israelitish reformers, inflicting penalties on false worshippers, would not legitimate the like proceedings among the Christian Gentiles. For the holy land of old was, by a deed of gift from God, miraculously, and indisputably granted to the Israelitish nation; and the condition on which they held it, was their observation of the Mosaic institutions. To violate them was what carried a rebellion in it, and was an high treason, against the king of the Theocracy, 'an iniquity to be punished by the judge.' At the same time sojourners in the land, were not compelled unto the keeping of these laws and rites, which Moses had given to his people. Nay, and the Israelites themselves fell, many of them, into the worst of heresies. Yet whilst they kept the

That religious sentiments ought not to be restrained by temporal penalties, might be farther argued from the absurd and ruinous consequences which would follow from this principle. If the magistrate support any religion, it will certainly be his own; and if he has the right to repress any, he will think it his duty to repress what he conceives to be error and false religion. But who hath made the magistrate the judge of Truth?—Alas! magistrates differ as much as other men in their opinions! The Protestant will persecute the Papists, and the Popish magistrate the Protestants;—the Athanasian will persecute the Unitarian, and the Unitarian the Athanasian;—the Episcopalian the Presbyterian, and the Presbyterian the Episcopalian. The fact has indeed been realized in melancholy experience; and in countries divided only by the Tweed, the principles of orthodoxy and church-government have so widely differed, that what has been punishable on one side has been rewardable on the other.

Dr. Paley maintains, “that it is lawful for the magistrate to interfere in the affairs of religion, whenever his interference appears to him to conduce, by its *general tendency* to the public happiness*.” Sensible, indeed, how liable this argument is to be abused by the Roman Catholics,

law and rites of Moses, the magistrate would not meddle with them. The heresy of the Sadducees struck at the foundation of all religion; yet we do not find that our Saviour blamed the Pharisees for not persecuting them, as they could have done. The Christian religion brings us not into a temporal Canaan. It knows no designs, it has no weapons, but what are purely spiritual.”

* Moral Phil. vol. ii. book vi. cap. 10.

he lays a peculiar stress upon the words “ general tendency,” and conjures the magistrate to consider what might be the effect of it being turned against him:—that is, he is to consider what might be the effect, if magistrates of other religions were to act upon the same principle: but this completely nullifies the rule; for if he is not to persecute till persecution appears to be for the general good, a wise man will never begin. This is, however, placing the sword naked in the hands of the Popish magistrate; for he is well assured, by the high authority of his church, that it is for the public happiness that religion should be restrained; and the dominions of Popery are so large, compared with the extent of the Protestant religion, that the fear of retaliation will not have the weight of a feather, in restraining him from persecution.

The principle itself is, indeed, too metaphysical for practice, and requires all magistrates to be philosophers, which is not likely very soon to be the case: but it has a far greater defect—it wants authority, of which it has not a single particle, except what is merely human. If the magistrate has any right to interfere, let him produce his patent*; and full, clear, and decisive ought that document to be, that may affect the peace, and liberty, and life of a whole nation,—in short, of all mankind.

* “ Affirmative precepts must be produced for a non-toleration — i. e. the punishing of erring persons.”—*Owen on Toleration*, p. 29.

ESSAY V.

On Intolerance in Religion.

“ There is nothing, certainly, more unreasonable, more inconsistent with the rights of human nature, more contrary to the spirit and precepts of the Christian religion, more iniquitous and unjust, more impolitic, than Persecution. It is against natural religion, revealed religion, and sound policy.”

*Earl Mansfield's Speech in the House of Lords,
in the case of the City against Evans,*

SATAN knows himself to be so totally unamiable in his own character, that he generally transforms himself into an angel of light when he wishes to become a tempter; and persecution, his favourite work, has a name so detested, that it is never presented to us, but in the form of zeal for God and religion, or for the salvation of men's souls. Of the former we have a remarkable instance in the case of Saul (afterwards called Paul) which presents us with the finished character of a religious persecutor.

Actuated by this bitter zeal he persecuted the saints at Jerusalem, insomuch that it is said “ he made havoc of the church, entering into every house, and haling thence men and women, committed them to prison*.” His zeal would not suffer him to wait (as some of the heathen did) till the disciples of Jesus were accused; but he entered into *every house* to search for them, and without pity to either age or sex, *haled* them indiscriminately to prison: and had not his

* Acts viii. 3.

course of impiety been arrested, would doubtless have pursued more of them to prison and to death.

In what light he afterwards considered this conduct we well know. So far from pleading his zeal, in apology for his cruelty, he considers it in the highest degree criminal; and never refers to it but in the strongest terms of reprobation. Not all the sufferings and labours of his future life could obliterate the remembrance; but he calls himself “the chief of sinners,—less than the least of all saints,—not worthy to be called an Apostle;”—and why? because he had persecuted the church of God*.”

But whence the zeal of Paul against Jesus and his disciples? It is sufficiently evident that he considered Jesus as an impostor and a blasphemer; and knowing that by the law of Moses such ought to die, he thought his conduct not only justifiable, but meritorious. “He verily thought that he ought to do many things against Jesus of Nazareth †;” and that in persecuting the Christians he was offering an acceptable “sacrifice to God ‡;”—a circumstance that ought to make us pause, in our admiration of religious zeal, when not under the direction of an enlightened conscience.

Not only zeal for God, but love to the *souls* of men, has been pleaded in apology for persecution. “Heresy (say these zealots) is damnable, and we wish to rescue men, at all events, from *everlasting burnings*; and seeing they are so blind to their own interests that they will not come over to the

* Acts xv. 9. † Acts xxvi. 9. ‡ See Campbell on John xvi.

true church, we think it our duty to bring them over, and ‘compel them to come in*,’ that they may be saved.” Benevolent creatures! they will murder the body, to save the soul;—they will hang you out of love, and roast you for the glory of God—singing *Te Deum* all the while! But if these priests are so anxious to save men from perdition, why not shew the same zeal to rescue them from other crimes, as well as heresy? Are not adultery, and perjury, and robbery, also deadly sins? Then why not apply the same efficacious remedy to thieves, and robbers, and other sinners?—Ah, no! *they* are brethren. Yes: of all criminals, persecutors are the *elder* brethren, and may trace up their pedigree to Cain, the first murderer, who slew his brother; “and wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother’s righteous†:” and “as then, he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now ‡.”

This text unravels the secret but true cause, in general, of religious persecution. There have been, and still may be, conscientious persecutors, who act from principle, as Paul did, and a most unhappy principle it is! But the general cause of persecution is hatred to God and good men. They hate the pure light of the gospel;—they hate the holy character of God and of his people;—they hate the lovely image of the Saviour in his disciples. Their own works are evil, and they cannot but, in some degree, be conscious of it; for no degree of ignorance can be sufficient

* Luke xiv. 23.

† 1 John iii. 12.

‡ Gal. iv. 29.

to convert adultery, theft, and perjury into virtues: and it excites in them envy, jealousy, and hatred, when they see in good men the contrast of their own vices.

The admirable manner in which the primitive Christians reasoned upon this subject may be seen in *Lactantius*. “There is no need,” say they, “of violence and injury, for religion cannot be constrained: to influence the will, words are to be used, rather than stripes. Let them [*i. e.* the heathen] exert all the force of their understandings. If their argument is just, let it be exhibited, so that indeed we may not yield only to their cruelty. Let them imitate us, and lay open the whole reason of the case; for we do not, as they pretend, deceive; we teach—we prove—we illucidate. Let them teach in the same manner, if they have any confidence in the truth;—let them speak out,—let them dare to dispute with us. They feel that, in human affairs, there is nothing more excellent than religion; that it ought to be defended with all their strength; but as they mistake religion itself, so they mistake the way in which it should be defended; for religion is to be maintained, not by killing, but by dying—not by cruelty, but by patience—not by wickedness, but by faith. If you wish to defend religion by blood—by torments—by wickedness—religion is not thus *defended*, but polluted and violated; for nothing is so voluntary as religion, in which, if the mind of the worshipper is averse, it is wholly void.

“We do not demand that our God, who is the God of all, be unwillingly worshipped of any;

and if he be not worshipped, we are not angry. We confide in his divine majesty, which is able to avenge such contempt of himself, as well as the labours and injuries of his servants: and therefore, when we suffer evil, we do not resist; but,—not acting as men who wish to appear the avengers of their deities, and rage against those who do not worship them,—we leave vengeance unto God*.”

Not only is persecution highly criminal, but perfectly nugatory; and persecutors are the most ignorant and absurd of mankind, inasmuch as they take the most direct means to defeat their own end: for it is most certain that “persecution produces no sincere conviction, nor any real change of opinion. On the contrary, it vitiates public morals, by driving men to prevarication; and commonly ends in a general, though secret infidelity, by imposing, under the name of Revealed Religion, systems of doctrine which men cannot believe, and dare not examine †.” The first impression of an attempt to impose a religion upon the human mind is highly repulsive: it suggests a bad opinion both of the persecutor and his religion ‡. Nay, so abhorrent to the mind of man is every degree of coercion, that I doubt not but a law to compel us to retain our opinions would, in nine instances out of ten, produce a change. Recurrence also to the civil power

* Lactant. Div. Instit. lib. v. cap. 20.

† Paley's Mor. Phil. vol. II. book vi. chap. 10.

‡ “If there be on earth a way to render the most sacred truth suspected, it is supporting it with threats, and pretending to terrify men into the belief of it.”—*Shaftesbury's Char.* vol. iii. p. 107.

shews a weakness of argument, just as having recourse to military aid betrays the imbecillity of the civil power. Persecutors, however, seldom trouble themselves about arguments; their appeal to the sword demonstrates that to be their last resource:—unless, indeed, we should suppose such men to act from mere principles of inhumanity.

Nor can persecution suppress truth. It may depress or check it for the moment, — it may murder its advocates and professors; but “the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church.” Ancient writers have compared Christianity to the palm-tree, which, as the old naturalists say, rises in proportion to the weights with which it may be loaded. *Justin Martyr* says, “We are slain with the sword, we are crucified, we are cast to the wild beasts, we are bound with chains, tortured and burnt; and yet we are not only constant to our profession, but we increase and multiply: the more we are persecuted and destroyed, the more are added to our numbers. As a vine, by being pruned and cut close, puts forth new shoots, and bears a greater abundance of fruit, so is it with us, who are the vine which God and his Christ have planted*.”

One thing indeed persecution may do, and has often done to a very great extent, — it can make *hypocrites* †. “A sweet religion” indeed, says

* Quoted Jortin’s Rem. on Eccl. Hist. vol. i. p. 336.

† “The contempt which both the Spaniards and Portugueze put on those whom they call New Christians, that is, whose ancestors, most of whom above 200 years ago* were obliged by violence

* Preached Nov. 5. 1735, n. p. 126.

Mr. Locke, speaking of a creed being forced upon the mind by persecution, — “A sweet religion, which obliges men to dissemble and tell lies for the salvation of souls*!” whereas the only religion acceptable to God, is the religion of the heart:—they that worship him acceptably must worship him in spirit and in truth †.

But here are several considerations which call for our attention.

1. It may be enquired, is the liberty for which I am pleading, meant to be absolute and uncontrolled?—So far as respects *religious* liberty, properly so called, I answer, most decidedly — YES. Every man has an unequivocal right to enquire and judge for himself, — to worship God according to the dictates of his conscience, — to vindicate his own principles, and to invite others to embrace them. If the arguments advanced in the preceding essays do not prove this, they prove nothing, and I have written altogether in vain.

2. Is it objected, that certain sects hold principles inimical to civil government, and the British constitution, and therefore cannot be tolerated with safety. Then I reply, *that* is a *political*

to profess Christianity, seems plainly to intimate, that they secretly suspect them to be Jews or Mahometans in their hearts, as many declare themselves to be, when they escape into a land of liberty.”

Doddridge's Works, vol. iii, p. 136.

Limboreh declares, that Orobio himself owned, “The Jews in Spain are taught by their parents, that, in order to escape the Inquisition, it is lawful to profess Christianity, while they deny it in their hearts; and to confirm that profession by swearing on the cross, and by eating swines flesh”, &c.—*Limb. Resp.* ad. Scrip. iii. cap. v. p. 78.

* Locke on Tol. p. 85.

† John iv. 24.

question, and does not come within the limits of my enquiry, which extends only to *religious* liberty; but if restraint *be* necessary to the safety of the state, I must confess, I exceedingly regret that a religious test should be thought necessary for a political purpose; and to speak distinctly, I cannot but consider the sacrament of the Lord's Supper as grossly profaned, when it is so applied.

In examining the *utility* of tests, we are to consider their operation on the persons to whom they are applied. To Atheists, who deny the being of a God, and to those Deists, who reject the doctrine of a future state, all tests are perfectly nugatory. To swear such men upon the Bible is manifestly absurd; and as to Sacraments, not all the seven sacraments of the church of Rome could bind them. Our law therefore properly rejects the testimony of such persons in all criminal prosecutions, whenever their infidelity is *proved*; and the same defect which renders persons insufficient evidences in a court of Justice, ought surely to exclude them from the Bench, and from the Senate.

With Roman Catholics the case is materially different; they believe the truth of the Christian religion: yet if they rely on a dispensing power to absolve them, of what avail are oaths, or any other tests? Evidently of none: but they have explicitly denied their belief in such dispensing power*; and it is certain that a great number of

* In answer to the questions proposed by Mr. Pitt to the foreign Catholic universities, they have replied, "That the Pope, or cardi-

British Catholics do regard this sacred obligation, or whence their scruple to take any oaths that may be required?—and yet it cannot be denied that in time past they have held it lawful to dispense both with oaths and promises, when they interfered with the interests of the Catholic church. So the Council of Constance (anno 1414) in the affair of Huss, justified the Emperor's breach of faith, on the ground that "no promise ought to be kept with heretics, to the prejudice of the Catholic faith*." And though many Catholics of the present day, I doubt not, disapprove this maxim; yet the Pope permits his clergy to take no oath to any secular power, but with a reserve in favour of his own authority. "I swear—to be submissive and obedient in all things, which shall not be contrary to the laws of God, *and the church* †." And, indeed, this is necessary to his being consistent, if still every bishop, at his consecration, swears—"Heretics, schismatics, and rebels to our Lord (the Pope)—I will to the utmost persecute and oppose ‡."

nals, or any body of men, or any individual of the church of Rome, cannot absolve or dispense with his Majesty's subjects from their *oath of allegiance*, upon any pretext whatsoever;" and "that there is no principle in the Catholic faith, by which Catholics are *justified* in not keeping faith with heretics."—*Butler's Address to the Protestants of Great Britain*, &c. second edit. p. 12.

* Hist. of the Council of Constance, lib. iv. § 32. The words of the Council are, "Nec aliqua sibi fides, aut promissio, de jure naturali, divino, et humano, fuerit in præjudicium Catholicæ fidei observanda."

† —"En tout ce qui ne sera pas contraire aux loix de Dieu, et de l'église."—*Relation de ce qui s'est passé à Rome*, &c. A Londres. Se vend chez MM. Keating and Co. 1812. Tom. iii. p. 41.

‡ "Hereticos, schismaticos, aut rebelles eidem Domino nostro, vel successoribus prædictis, pro posse persequar et impugnabo."—

It is, however, upon the assurance of their regarding oaths, that we admit their evidence in our courts of justice; but care should be taken to swear a Catholic upon the Vulgate (their authorized version) on the same principle that a Jew should be sworn only upon the *Hebrew Pentateuch**; for neither the one nor the other holds our translation to be sacred or authentic; and I strongly suspect much of the perjury in our law courts, and public offices, arises from a neglect of this caution.

3. But there is another view of this subject which seems to present a strong objection to the complete enjoyment of *civil* liberty, if not of that which is more properly religious. Some of our great law authorities, and all our civilians, represent the church of England as an original and essential part of our constitution; and it is on this ground especially, that exclusive laws and religious tests have been defended: and if this be correct, then none but members of that church can consistently support it, in *all* its parts. Indeed, so far am I from thinking that a conscientious Dissenter can consistently maintain the hierarchy, the ecclesiastical laws, and the exclusive principles of our establishment, that I am convinced he must wish the unhallowed union (as he considers it) were dissolved, and the kingdom of Christ separated from all worldly empire.

Pontif. Rom. (edit. Antwerp.) A. D. 1627, p. 59.— See *Erskine's Sketches of Eccles. Hist.* vol. i. p. 228.

* The law orders a Jew to be sworn on the Pentateuch (as some do not believe the whole Old Testament) but not, I believe, in Hebrew.— See *Dr. Furneaux's Letters to Judge Blackstone*, second edit. p. 37, Note.

But this essential union of church and state has been denied, not only by Milton and the Puritans, but by Mr. Justice Forster, and some other great legal authorities, who maintain that the ecclesiastical establishment is no integral part of the British constitution,—that the ecclesiastical authorities are wholly dependant on the civil,—and that all the temporal power assumed by churchmen, was introduced in the gross darkness which formed the atmosphere of Popery; and is as illegal, in reference to our ancient constitution, as it is unchristian in reference to the Bible. But as this is clearly a *political* question, and I am anxious to keep to topics properly religious, I shall confine myself, on this head, to a quotation, and farther reference in the margin*.

* “With my reader’s leave (says Judge Foster) I will take a short review of those transactions [of Lord Cromwell and Archbp. Cranmer] which, I think, let us fully into the sense of our Reformers, touching the source and spring of episcopal jurisdiction. The statutes declare that the king, as supreme head of the church, hath power to visit and reform all errors, heresies, and enormities, which by any manner of *spiritual* authority are, or lawfully may be reformed:—that archbishops, bishops, and other ecclesiastical persons, have no manner of jurisdiction or authority, but by, under, and *from* the king, from whom all ecclesiastical jurisdiction is derived. In consequence of these Parliamentary declarations, commissions issue under the great seal, empowering *laymen* to visit, *tam in capite quam in membris*, all churches, without distinction; to enquire into the lives, manners, and qualifications of the *clergy of all ranks*; to punish delinquents by deprivation or suspension; and, in general, to *inflict all manner of church censures*. The bishops sue out commissions under the great seal, empowering them to confer orders, to visit their dioceses, and to exercise *all other branches of the episcopal authority, during the good pleasure of the king*. And inhibitions are sent to the bishops, suspending their visitatorial power, and the exercise of *any manner* of episcopal jurisdiction, throughout the kingdom, till license obtained from the king, for that the king himself intended shortly to visit.”—*Exam. of Bp. Gibson’s Codex, &c.* p. 33, 4.

4. Notwithstanding, however, I consider every conscientious Dissenter (that is, every one who dissents from conscientious principles) as naturally wishing the dissolution of a union which he considers unlawful, and also dangerous to the liberties of mankind; on the other hand, there are many circumstances calculated to make a good man pause, before he should attempt to overthrow a church which has so long and intimately entwined itself with the civil power; and rather wait to see it fall by its own gravity, than reach out a hand to bring it down, lest both should fall together. "This," says a pious and candid Dissenter of the present day, "this is a point which I wish to have clearly explained and properly understood. It is commonly supposed, that if a man secedes from the establishment, he would wish to get as many members as he can, to join him in his secession; and that great danger must consequently attend his exertions. This is a mistake. He that is a seceder from the established church, on Scriptural grounds, so far from inviting the members of it indiscriminately to join him, could not receive them without a scrutiny, that he has very good ground to believe would end in the rejection of a vast majority. To speak plainly, he could receive only those who are stigmatized by the world in general, as deluded fanatics, or insidious hypocrites. . . . The most zealous friends, therefore, of the established church have not that ground for alarm that they seem to think." In another place, the same author says (and he speaks the sentiment of many) "I do not, in consequence of seceding from the establishment, feel

myself either prompted by inclination, or required by any call of duty, to move a finger in hostility to the establishment*.”

Farther, it appears to me that the great body Dissenters in the present day are not so much separated from the church by principle as by circumstances; but few, comparatively, of the descendants of the Non-conformists understand the grounds of dissent,—a circumstance owned and lamented by their more intelligent and judicious brethren. Many are Dissenters, as they are Protestants, because their fathers were; and therefore, when interest, connections, or other circumstances, invite them back to the church, they feel little reluctance to return: and as to the new Dissenters, commonly called Methodists, they generally dissent, not from scruples of conscience, but either because they disapprove the preaching in the church, or prefer the accommodations of the meeting. From these persons it is obvious the church can have nothing to fear, except it be the restoration of the doctrines of the Reformation!

But the same cannot be said of Roman Catholics. Protestant Dissenters, not aspiring to be Lord Bishops, have no ambition to fill their seats; but the members of the Roman church, by keeping up a nominal hierarchy in these kingdoms, naturally regard all ecclesiastical authority, as belonging to themselves; and look with an evil eye on those who fill the situations, to which they

* A Plea for Primitive Christianity, by T. Kelly (Dublin) 12mo, 1815, p. 6, 12.

conceive they have a prior claim*. They, moreover, considering the church of England as having apostatized from them—must naturally wish to see it restored to their mother church of Rome, and the great schism (as they call it) healed.

5. In comparing the dangers which might probably result from a complete toleration of Catholic and Protestant Dissenters, we should consider the probable results of either enjoying a predominating influence. The principles of the former were always fostered by the house of Stuart, as friendly to arbitrary power; while those of the latter were decidedly in favour of the liberties of the people. On this subject I beg again to cite the eloquent language of Mr. Hall.

“ The nature of their public conduct will best appear from a rapid survey of some of those great political events in which it has had room to display itself; where, though our history has been ransacked to supply invective, it will be seen their merits more than compensate for any

* It appears that the English Catholics (which have been reckoned at 300,000) are governed, in spiritual things, by four Vicars Apostolic, deputed by the Pope, and having nominal Sees only; viz. Dr. Gibson, Vicar of the Northern district; Dr. Milner, of the Midland; Dr. Poynter, of the London; and Dr. Collingridge, of the Western district. Also, that there are 900 chapels in England, mostly erected within the last 25 years, exclusive of those in the houses of the Catholic nobility and gentry. That in 1813 only, 800 children were confirmed in the Catholic religion in Manchester, 1000 at Liverpool, and 1200 at Garstang. That both in London and many parts of the country, are establishments for education, on the plan of nunneries, for young ladies of the various religious orders of the Benedictines, Augustines, &c. with many boarding-schools for boys, under the care of priests and Jesuits. — See the *Laity's Directory*, published annually by Keating and Co.

errors they may have committed. Their zeal in opposing Charles, has been an eternal theme of reproach; but it should be remembered, that when that resistance first took place, the Parliament consisted, for the most part, of churchmen, and was fully justified in its opposition by the arbitrary measures of the court. Had the pretensions of Charles been patiently acquiesced in, our government had long ago been despotic.

“What medium might have been found between tame submission, and open hostility, and whether matters were not afterwards pushed to an extremity against the unfortunate monarch, it is not for me to determine, nor does it concern the vindication of Dissenters; for long before the final catastrophe which issued in the king's death, the favourable intentions of parliament were overruled by the ascendancy of Cromwell; the parliament itself oppressed by his arms, and the influence both of Churchmen and Dissenters, bent under military usurpation. The execution of Charles was the deed of a faction, condemned by the great body of the Puritans, as a criminal severity; but whatever blame they may be supposed to have incurred on account of their conduct to Charles, the merit of restoring monarchy in his son, was all their own. The entire force of the empire was in their hands; Monk himself of their party; the parliament, the army, all Puritans; yet were they disinterested enough to call the heir to the throne, and yield the reins into his hands, with no other stipulation than that of liberty of conscience, which he violated, with a baseness and ingratitude peculiar to his character.

All the return he made them, for the recovery of his power, consisted in depriving 2000 of their ministers, and involving the whole body in a persecution, by which not less than ten thousand are supposed to have perished in imprisonment and want; but their patriotism was not to be shaken by these injuries. When towards the latter end of Charles II.'s reign, the character of his successor inspired a dread of the establishment of Popery, to avert that evil, they cheerfully acquiesced in an exclusion from all places of emolument and trust; an extraordinary instance of magnanimity. When James II. began to display arbitrary views, Dissenters were among the first to take the alarm, regarding with jealousy even an indulgence, when it flowed from a dispensing power. The zeal with which they co-operated in bringing about the Revolution, the ardour with which they always espoused its principles, are too well known to need any proof, and can only be rendered more striking by a contrast with the conduct of the high-church party.

“ The attachment of Dissenters to the house of Hanover was signalized in a manner too remarkable to be soon forgotten. In the rebellions of fifteen and forty-five, they ventured on a breach of the law, by raising and officering regiments out of their own body; for which the Parliament were reduced to the awkward expedient of passing an act of indemnity. This short sketch of their political conduct, as it is sufficient to establish their loyalty beyond suspicion, so may it well augment our surprise at the extreme obloquy and reproach with which they are treated.

Mr. Hume*, a competent judge, if ever there was one, of political principles, and who was far from being partial to Dissenters, candidly confesses, that to *them* we are indebted for the preservation of our liberty †.”

6. Catholics, however vociferous they may be in the cause of liberty, are the friends of toleration only where they are subject to restraint, as in Great Britain and Ireland.

In the correspondence between Pius VII. and Bonaparte, when the latter proposed the toleration of Protestants, the former replied as follows, in a circular letter, dated Feb. 5, 1808:—“It is proposed that all kinds of religious worship should be free, and their exercise allowed in public. But *we have rejected this article*, as contrary to the canons and the councils,—to the tranquillity of society, and the happiness of the state, on account of the fatal consequences which would be derived therefrom ‡.”

And in November following, when the Pope and Bonaparte had agreed upon the *Concordat*,

* “So absolute was the authority of the crown [in the reign of Queen Elizabeth] that the precious spark of liberty had been kindled, and was preserved *by the Puritans alone*; and it was to this sect, whose principles appeared so frivolous, and habits so ridiculous, that the English owe *the whole freedom* of their constitution.”—*Hume's History of England*, vol. v. 8vo, p. 189, ed. 1763.

† Hall's Apology, p. 75—9.—The authorities for most of these facts may be found in Towgood's *Dissent*. Appen. No. 1.

‡ “On entend que tous les cultes soient libres, et publiquement exercés. Mais nous avons rejeté cet article, comme contraire aux canons, et aux conciles, à la religion Catholique, à la tranquillité de la vie, et au bonheur de l'état, par les funestes conséquences qui en deriveraient.”—*Relation de ce qui s'est passé à Rome*, &c. tom. i. p. 43. N. B. The original Italian is also given.

the latter artfully published with it, certain organic laws (*lois organiques*) which maintained the civil government to be independent of the church, and countenanced the toleration of the Reformed. On this occasion, Cardinal Pecca, under the Pope's authority, published a letter in which, after denying the first position, he asserts, "It is equally false and calumnious that the Concordat has sanctioned the toleration of other forms of worship. This religious convention sanctioned only the glorious return of the Catholics of France to unity; and contains not one word that refers to any worship, condemned or proscribed by the church of Rome. If in the *organic articles* we find any appearance of toleration, whatever may seem to accredit them as making part of the Concordat, by their being published together, and under the same date, these articles have always been censured and condemned by the Holy Father*."

Not only so but in various parts of the Pope's correspondence with Bonaparte, he inveighs against him for his "protection of all the sects, and every form of worship,"—argues that because the Catholic, Apostolic, and Roman church is divine, therefore must it be "one and *unique*;" and can make "no alliance with any other:" to do which, would be to unite "Christ with Belial, light with darkness, truth with error, true piety with impiety;"—that the boasted respect of Napoleon for the various religions is a mere pretext,

* "Il est également faux et calomnieux que le Concordat ait consacré la tolérance des autres cultes, &c. *Ibid.* tom. ii. p. 37.

and only proves his disregard to the Catholic church, out of which, he reminds him, is no hope of salvation: (*della quale non vi è speranza di salute:*) he claims the right to interfere among “all the nations of the earth,” in *secular* concerns, as well as spiritual; about books, marriages, bastardies, divorces, convents, monasteries, vows of celibacy, oaths of allegiance, as well as the personal attendance of his ministers*. Nor does he forget the right of excommunicating princes, of which he gave an exemplification in his *anathemas* on the then Emperor of France and his adherents.

In Spain also, when the Cortes suppressed the horrible Court of Inquisition, though they fully established Popery, and allowed no toleration, yet the Pope’s *Nuncio* (Peter Gravina, Archbp. of Nicea) took instant alarm, and instigated the clergy to oppose the publication of the decree. The following is an extract of a letter from the Rev. *Nuncio* to the Dean and Chapter of Malaga, dated, March 5, 1813:—“In such case, and being enjoined to me by the brief of my legation, to make the *greatest possible exertion*, in all things concerning the Catholic faith, and the Holy Roman Church; as also to do *whatever* I may find to be *in favour of the church* and for the consolation and edification of the people, and the *honour of the Holy Sire*, I should be wanting in

* Vide vol. i. p. 193—5. See also “Correspondance authentique de la cour de Rome avec la France.” Paris, 1814— and “Fragmens relatifs à l’histoire Eccles. &c. Paris, 1814. In both which are preserved several of the same documents, which places their authenticity beyond dispute.

all these sacred duties, if, with the greatest respect, as well as with the Christian liberty of an apostolic legate, and a representative of the Pope, I did not state to your Highness, that the abolition of the Inquisition may be *extremely injurious to religion*, whilst it actually wounds the rights and primacy of the Roman Pontiff, who established it, as *necessary and beneficial* to the church and the faithful*." It now appears that the Spanish people were of the same mind with their ghostly fathers; Ferdinand and the Inquisition have both been restored; and the people must surely be supremely happy in possessing a King and an Inquisitor General in one person. "A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land: the prophets prophesy falsely, and *the priests bear rule* by their means, and the people love to have it so; but—what will they do in the end thereof†?"

In the Netherlands also, still more recently, when they fell under the dominion of the Protestant House of Orange, and their new king was disposed to give religious liberty to all his subjects, the Catholic bishops demurred, remonstrated, and argued against religious toleration, with all their might, as follows:—

"Sire, we do not hesitate to declare to your Majesty that the *canonical laws*, which are sanctioned by the ancient constitutions of the country, are *incompatible* with the projected constitution, which would give in Belgium *equal* favour and protection to *all religions*. The canonical laws

* Copied from the Times Paper. † Jer. v. 30. 31.

have always rejected *schism* and *heresy* from the bosom of the Catholic church. The Christian Emperors thought it their duty to maintain these laws, and to secure their execution, as may be easily seen in the collection of edicts upon this subject. From Charlemagne, down to the unhappy epocha of 1781, and the following years, all the sovereigns of this country, in every age, *exclusively protected* the Apostolical Roman Catholic religion, and *secured* to it the undisturbed enjoyment of *all the rights* and privileges, in the possession of which they found it.

“We most respectfully take the liberty to lay before your Majesty an article of the new constitution, which, in securing the same protection to *all religions*, would be *incompatible* with the free and entire *exercise of our official duties*.

“We are bound, Sire, incessantly to preserve the people entrusted to our care from the doctrines which are in opposition to the doctrines of the Catholic church. We could not release ourselves from this obligation, without violating our most sacred duties; and if your Majesty, by virtue of a fundamental law, protected in these provinces the *public profession* and spread of these doctrines, the progress of which we are *bound to oppose*, with all the *care and energy* which the Catholic church expects from our office, we should be in formal opposition to the laws of the state, to the measures which your Majesty might adopt to maintain them among us:” —that is, if I am able to comprehend the meaning of these ecclesiastics, ‘If your Majesty tolerates the Protestants, the duties of our office will oblige us to

rebellion;”—“and, in spite of all our endeavours (they add) to maintain union, and peace,” that is, uniformity in religion, “the public tranquillity might be disturbed.”

The address then goes on to state the farther dangerous consequences likely to result from the liberal principle of toleration—namely, that the Reformation of the sixteenth century may be renewed and more widely spread, and that the power and consequence of the clergy may be lessened, of both which events I really believe there may be danger; and therefore do not wonder to hear that his Majesty’s declaration in favour of religious liberty hath “already filled every [Catholic] heart with consternation.” In consequence of this opposition, it is said, his Majesty has applied to the Pope, on his restoration (chiefly by Protestant influence) to interfere with his authority, in order to enjoin obedience to the civil power; but (according to the public prints *) “Letters from Rome say, that the ambassador of the king of the Netherlands has received a very unsatisfactory answer to the complaints which he had made to the Pope, concerning the behaviour of the Belgian bishops. The Pope declared that the *toleration of several religions is contrary to the principles of the Catholic church*; and that the Archbp. Mechlin has given public offence, by doing homage to their principles of toleration, in the new constitution of the kingdom of the Netherlands; whereas the bishops who have refused their signatures have done their duty,

* Dated Arau, April 20, 1816.

Further, that a Protestant prince cannot nominate bishops,—that the king should either alter the constitution, in what concerns the article of religion, or not call upon the clergy to take the oath to it.”

It is true that some English Catholics are far more tolerant; and the liberal resolutions of certain Catholic bodies have been cited, and some respectable names, as those of Mr. Butler and Mr. Eustace*, have been given, as instances in point: but, alas! the liberality of these men has been brought in proof that they are ignorant of the principles of their church; for, as a writer in the Catholic Journal observes, if “there can exist *only one true church*, every other form of Christianity is stamped with the seal of *reprobation*.” And as to the liberal resolutions of certain Catholic meetings, Bp. Milner has very seriously cautioned his flock “against signing or voting any resolutions, or other instruments, regarding matters of religion, which (says he) have not been duly weighed and sanctioned by *your prelates*.” On this the editor of the Orthodox Journal very seriously remarks, “Here then we have the sentiments and opinions of a Doctor of our church, on the late proceedings of our *weak and false* brethren, officially declared to his own flock, and through them to the whole Catholic body †.” And still more recently, when Mr. Butler and some other liberal Catholics committed themselves, in attempting to sanction the gene-

* Author of the Classical Tour, Letter from Paris, &c.

† Orthodox Journal, Feb. 1816, p. 53.

ral education of the poor, another prelate (Bp. Poynter) has entered his protest against it*.

Now, since "obedience is a first principle of the Catholic Religion †," and since the Catholic priests and bishops will not suffer their children to attend the same schools, nor read in the same spelling-book, or Bible, with the Protestants — and since they have given their decided opinion that it is better for them to remain in utter ignorance than learn from Protestants, or even the laity of their own communion, though the priests have confessedly not time to teach them ‡—it is in vain to talk of the liberality of a few laymen, who must evidently submit to their ghostly superiors, on the pain of being refused *absolution* "in the article of death §;" and then being sent, not only to purgatory, but to hell itself, for their liberality.

* See Report of the Committee, on Education, p. 530, 536.

† In the Irish Court of King's Bench Nov. 13, 1815,—The Rev. J. Duffy, the Catholic Chaplain to Newgate, Dublin, being called to account why he had not performed the duty, alleged the injunction of his spiritual superior (Dr. Troy) and being told that was not satisfactory to the Court, replied, "My Lord, *Spiritual obedience is the first principle of the Catholic Church*, and I might as well attempt to destroy the Christian Church, as to subvert *any one* of its principles."—*Times* of Nov. 17.—See also *Protestant Union*, p. 83.

‡ See the Examination of Bishop Poynter, before the Committee of the House of Commons.—*Report*, p. 528—38.

I am happy to hear that, notwithstanding the bigotry of their superiors, there are some few priests, both in England and Ireland who have the courage and liberality to sanction the education of the poor, and the circination of the Scriptures. I refer to the new school at Shadwell, and to the last Report of the Hibernian Society, just published.

§ The following short epistle is extracted from a "Postscript" to the "Correspondence on the Formation, &c. of the Roman Catholic

The plain inference from these facts is, that Popery is essentially and unalterably *intolerant*; and Mr. Plowden, a Catholic of high respectability, hath good reason for asserting that modern Catholics differ not “one *iota* from their predecessors*,” either in their faith or practice. *Semper eadem* is their motto, and should be our *memento*: and the question now is, Whether the principle of self-preservation and defence does not necessarily oblige Protestants, to restrain those, who neither would nor could allow them toleration? The only case in which religious freedom can be dangerous, is when a religion is permitted, which itself will tolerate no other; but would rekindle the fires of persecution, and deluge the country with the blood of its best citizens!

Still I would not restrain even these bigots in their faith or worship: I would only deny them the power of interrupting ours; and this appears

Bible Society.” p. 91. (Printed by Seeley, 1813.) It is a letter from the Titular Bishop of Killala, to the Catholic Priest of Killglass, in Sligo.

“ Rev. Sir,

March 27, 1811.

On Sunday next, Mr. Haran and I attend at Killglass chapel, in order to *cry down* the nefarious Deistical [*i. e.* Protestant] Schools, which the unrelenting enemies of our religion dared to establish, together with all their spurious productions. Assure all parents who will persevere in permitting the growing generation to attend such places, no Priest shall console or absolve them, *even at the hour of their death*; and order the same thing to be done *bis, ter, et sæpissimè*, in Drumard and Shrien. *Vive, V'ale.*

(Signed) *Dom. Alladen.*” That is, Dominicus Alladensis, or Dominick of Killala.

* An intelligent Catholic being lately asked “What is it you are really anxious to obtain?” very candidly replied, “That we should be in your situation, and you in ours.” Letters of *Amicus Hibernicus* (1816.) p. 21. See also Dr. Dromore’s Speech, p. 25.

to me the only restraint of which they now have to complain. Catholic emancipation has, in my view, no reference to the religious toleration of Catholics, but only to their admission into offices of power and influence in the state. With respect to the exercise of their worship, their ecclesiastics have only to enter their names at the Sessions of the peace, and they are at full liberty to perform their functions, without control.

Catholics are also allowed to instruct their own children, or keep academies for others, of either sex; and they do, in fact, advertise such institutions publicly, under the sanction of various religious orders, as the Benedictines, Augustines, Poor Clares, &c. and, in Ireland, a college is supported by Government, for the education of their clergy. As to the disabilities of which they complain, they are, I believe, as follows:—They cannot present to advowsons, and, I should suppose, would not if they could, as they can present only Protestants. In the army, they are eligible to every rank short of General of the Staff* :—in the law, to every office but those of Judge and King's Counsel. They enjoy the elective franchise, but are disqualified to sit in either House of Parliament, or in the Privy Council, or to fill certain high offices of State. But which of these interferes with the full exercise of religious liberty, or the rights of conscience, I am at a loss to say†.

And thus we are told that five millions of peo-

* See a letter to a Protestant Dissenter, &c. signed *Socia*, p. 4—10. Also Prot. Union, p. 43.

† See the *Laiy's Directory*, published annually.

ple are groaning under their incapacity, to become Aldermen and Common Councilmen, members of Parliament, Generals in Chief, Judges and Prime Ministers ! the laws which thus incapacitate them are called “the most sanguinary that ever disgraced the annals of a Christian Country :” and their sufferings are compared with the burning of temples, the plunder of houses and families, and the expatriation of half a city !

Protestant Dissenters are under most of the same restraints and disabilities ; and are, beside, obliged to licence their places of worship, which is not required of Catholics. It is true, they object to these disabilities ; and allege truly, that there is not the same reason for their continuance as in the other case, because they have long given up the principles of intolerance : nor does there appear to be any danger of their altering the ecclesiastical constitution, unless they became a majority of the population, and then Dr. Paley thinks it should be altered*. But even then, there are such mutual jealousies between the different sects, that they would rather continue the establishment than admit any other denomination to pre-eminence and power. So it was observed in the protest of Lord Somers, and about thirty other Peers, against Queen Anne’s Schism Bill. “Since the several sects of Dissenters differ from each other as much as they do from the established church, they can never form of themselves a National church, nor have any temptation to set up any one sect among them :

* Paley’s Mor. Phil. vol. II. lib. vi. ch. 10.

for in that case all that the other sects can expect is only a Toleration, which they already enjoy*." Moreover they have long since learned that *lord-brethren* are by no means more courteous than *lord-bishops*; and I hope experience has taught most of us the danger of popular revolutions: but here I am again wandering into political disquisition, and shall therefore conclude this Essay with expressing my opinion, that a decided majority of the present body of Dissenters, are so thoroughly convinced of the danger of conceding political power to the Catholics, especially in Ireland. that they do not wish to purchase their own emancipation (as it is called) at such a risk † So their ancestors in the reign of James II. as already observed, nobly refused his offer of religious liberty, when granted in a way inconsistent with the constitution and the general good.

* Parliament History, vol. VI. p. 1356.

† It has been said that disabilities implying censure, operate as a punishment, which, as we do not allege the religion of Catholics as a crime, are therefore manifestly unjust. But though we charge no criminality upon their faith, we by no means consider as innocent, their principle of persecution. It is true, most other sects have persecuted, but they have renounced the principle; and they could do it with consistency, because they claimed no infallibility. But it is otherwise with Catholics; neither the Pope nor the Clergy, at home or abroad, have done this, except in the case of a few individuals, who are censured on that account. The dogmas of their faith are like the laws of the Medes and Persians, subject to no change; and to own that they have erred, or even can err, is to give up the vital principle of their religion—its *infallibility*.

Mr. Butler (in his "Address to Protestants," p. 13.) has very artfully repelled the charge of persecution, by observing they deny "the right of the Pope or the church to *temporal* power," i. e. in these kingdoms; and "without temporal power persecution cannot subsist." But does not Mr. B. know that the spiritual power has

ESSAY VI.

Historic Sketch of the Rise and Progress of Intolerance.

“The blood of many erring persons, I doubt not, will one day have a *Quo warranto* granted them against their orthodox slayers; who did it to promote the glory of God.”

DR. J. OWEN.

IN the first age of Christianity the church was like corn ground between two millstones—persecuted by both Jews and Pagans; the former, indeed, soon became themselves the subjects of penal sufferings, partly through their own turbulence, and partly from their being confounded with the Christians, notwithstanding the hostility between them. Many of the latter were Jews by nation, though converted to the faith of Jesus; and Jews and Christians, however disagreed on this point, were equally inimical to the idolatry of the Pagans. These therefore confounded them under the odious name of Atheists, as refusing equally the worship of *their* Gods: for perse-

always made a tool of the temporal; that the priests, to preserve their garments from blood, hand over their criminals to the secular powers, and perhaps hypocritically beseech them to shew mercy, at the same time as they teach them they must not do it? Beside, it is *temporal*, and not spiritual power, against which we wish to guard. Let our Magistrates, our Judges, and our Legislators, become Catholic, and they dare not, on the peril of their salvation, disobey the church.

cutors seldom employ discrimination: that men dare to think for themselves, and have an opinion of their own, is enough to render them obnoxious to their tyrants.

To detail the horrors of the ten first persecutions would be foreign to my design. Two of the chief authors of these were Nero and Domitian, names as execrable in History as “the Devil and Satan,”—and with as much reason. The former was a harper and a gladiator—or in modern language, a fiddler and a prize fighter. It was his ambition to excell in every thing that rendered him contemptible; and when he found himself despised, as every where he must be, it furnished an excuse for gratifying his thirst for human blood. The other emperor I have named was Domitian, the fly-catcher, who like other ruffians, began his career of cruelty with tormenting

“ Poor harmless flies,
“ That, with their pretty buzzing melody,
“ Come but to make us merry.

By degrees he learned to torment men, and especially Christians, until at last he trembled at his own shadow, as though it were the avenger of blood following him.

It grieves me to the heart, that in the list of persecutors I must record the names of Trajan, of Marcus Aurelius, and of others, the most illustrious of their age for all the virtues of Paganism. And what shall we say to this fact? These men did not shed blood, like Nero and Domitian, for the pleasure of seeing it flow; but superstition supplied the stimulus that others received from

their natural cruelty. The Priests and the Philosophers taught, and the people and their rulers readily believed, that the heavens refused rain and the earth its fruits, because the gods were offended at the desertion of their altars; and as opposite causes sometimes produced like effects, so the love of their country produced in these Emperors the same effects that natural cruelty produced in others. It was in vain that the enlightened Antoninus Pius reasoned in favour of Toleration, that the Christians were increased by persecution; that their perseverance in their principles gave them the advantage over their Pagan adversaries, and proclaimed them conquerors; and that, therefore, they should propitiate the gods by their own piety, and not by the blood of Christians. This reasoning was not understood in his time, nor for more than a thousand years after:—so backward are men to learn the rights of conscience and the duties of benevolence!

Marcus Aurelius (or Antoninus) was a persecutor from principle, and, in the course of nineteen years steady perseverance in the work, is supposed to have sacrificed as many Christians as the monster Nero*. “The number of martyrs cannot be computed, and many of them very distinguished persons”—among whom was Polycarp, the venerable disciple of St. John. In this last instance it appears that the heathen were not altogether devoid of feeling, nor so prodigal of human life as might be supposed. Extraordinary pains were taken to persuade Polycarp to apostate

* See Mosheim's Comment, vol. II. p. 62.

tise, first by the Irenarch Herod and his father Nicetas, who met him on his way to martyrdom, and took him into their chariot; and afterwards by the proconsul, who exhorted him to take pity on his own grey hairs—"What harm is it to say "Lord Cæsar!—to sacrifice and be safe?—reproach Christ, and I will release thee"—to whom he gave this noble answer: "Eighty and six years have I now served Christ, and he has never wronged me in the least, how then can I blaspheme my King and Saviour*?"

It was not then so much the want of feeling, as a regard to justice and propriety, that led the virtuous heathen Emperors to persecute the Christians. They were absolute monarchs, and conceived they had the same authority over their souls as over their bodies. To think differently from the sovereign was high presumption; but to refuse to worship his gods, was treason and rebellion. Even the enlightened Pliny avows this sentiment: for though he acquits Christians of immorality, he frankly owns that, in his opinion, they deserved to suffer for their obstinacy†.

But it must be confessed, that the heathens were not inimical to every kind of toleration. In one instance, perhaps, they had more correct ideas than many Christians; for they not only tolerated other pagan nations, but they tolerated the gods themselves: and when a foreign divinity was proposed, the senate put it to the vote,

* Epistle of the church at Smyrna to that of Philadelphia, concerning the martyrdom of Polycarp.—Milner's Church History. vol. 1. p. 209.

† Pliny's Epistles, book. x. p. 97, 98.

whether his godship should be admitted into the Pantheon; and if his pretensions were satisfactory, he was allowed to receive the worship of his admirers. It has been said that the Emperor Tiberius once proposed JESUS CHRIST as a candidate for this honour*; and had it not been for his disgraceful death—the accursed death of the cross—it is possible he might have been admitted. But had he been elected, not a Christian in the Roman empire but would have spurned at the idea. The Pagans were indeed aware of this, and complained bitterly of the unsocial spirit of Christianity. The God of the Jews and of the Christians admitted of no partner on his throne; nor could an idol stand within his sanctuary. And to place Jesus among the pagan rabble of the Pantheon, would be a degradation infinitely lower than the stigma of the cross—it would be crucifying the Son of God afresh, and that in worse company than before.

Persecution, though in different degrees, and sometimes originating in opposite principles, continued in the Roman Empire till it became Christian, and became Christian with it. Before, however, we come to this new form of tyranny, I would beg to drop one remark upon the old. In addition to the common horrors of a guilty conscience, to which all persecutors are liable, the Almighty sometimes struck the arrow of his vengeance into their very souls. Galerius Max-

* This rests chiefly on the authority of Tertullian, and is thought not very probable.—See *Jortin's Ecclesiastical History*, vol. I. p. 28. *Mosheim's Comment.* vol. I. p. 159.

iminian was afflicted, like Herod the great, with terrible ulcers, which bred worms while he was yet alive, and emitted a fœtor intolerable even to himself. Finding no relief, either from his physicians, his priests, or his gods, he at length turned his eye to the God of the Christians for a cure (for he had heard of the clemency of JEHOVAH) and issued a whining proclamation in favour of the Christians, which procured a temporary respite to their persecution: but as we hear nothing of his penitence, so we can say nothing of his pardon. His sufferings on a throne were, perhaps, equal to those of the martyrs on the rack, or in the flames, and without any of their support—for it is “a terrible thing to fall into the hands of the living God!”

But a grand revolution was now approaching, which put an end to *Pagan* persecution, and introduced the monster a second time into the Roman Empire—marked with the sign of the cross upon his forehead. The edict of Milan, A. D. 313, not only restored to the church its confiscated property, but gave liberty, as well to Christians as to “all others,” of following “the religion which each individual thinks proper to prefer, to which he has addicted his mind, and which he may deem the best adapted to his own use*.” In this celebrated decree, the confederate princes, Constantine and Licinius, “carefully explain every ambiguous word, remove every exception, and exact from the governors of the provinces a strict obedience to the true and simple meaning of an

* Gibbon's History, vol. III. p. 245.

edict, which was designed to establish and secure, without any limitation, the claims of religious liberty*.”

It does not appear, however, that churchmen themselves had such enlightened ideas of the rights of conscience. They seem to have supposed that persecution was as necessary to support the Christian as the heathen priesthood. “The grateful applause of the Clergy,” says Mr. Gibbon, “has consecrated the memory of a prince, who indulged their passions and promoted their interest. Constantine gave them security, wealth, honour, and revenge; and the support of the orthodox faith was now considered as the most sacred and important duty of the civil magistrate. The edict of Milan, the great charter of Toleration, had confirmed to each individual of the Roman world, the privilege of choosing and professing his own religion. But this inestimable privilege was soon violated; with the knowledge of truth the Emperor imbibed the maxims of persecution; and the sects which dissented from the Catholic church were afflicted and oppressed by the triumph of Christianity†.”

The encrease of these sects may be thus accounted for. Hitherto the Christians had been a simple pious people, more remarkable, generally considered, for their devotion and morality, than for accuracy in thinking and speaking. In these

* *Ibid.* Vide Eusebius, lib. x. cap. 5.

† *Gibbon's History*, vol. III. p. 309.—This author mentions as an instance of the Emperor's own liberality, his jocular reproof of the Novatian Bishop—“Acesius, take a ladder, and get up to heaven by yourself.” Note *ibid.*

early times very few of them possessed a Bible or even a Testament complete; and if they procured a Gospel or an Epistle, (all in MS. it must be remembered) in times of persecution they were obliged to hide it, or surrender it to the flames. In the short intervals when they were allowed to meet together in private houses, or more frequently "in dens and caverns of the earth," they compared their scriptures together, and exhorted one another. But this partial acquaintance with the scriptures gave a bias to their modes of thinking and speaking, according as they had studied the writings of Matthew or John—of Paul or James, and that without possessing any radical difference of opinion. Now they began to examine their sacred oracles more critically and philosophically. Many of the Pagan philosophers began to think favourably of their creed, as it assumed a more systematic form. Some avowed themselves converts to the doctrine of the cross, and were received with complacency and gratulation. They became, it is true, able advocates for Christianity, and exposed the absurdities of paganism with great effect; but at the same time they mixed with the sacred truths of the gospel many of the traditions of the oriental philosophy, as well as the refined speculations of the Greeks: by these means the pure doctrines of the cross were corrupted, Christianity became the subject of perpetual dispute, and was divided into a variety of sects. And, in proportion as they departed from the simplicity of the scriptures, they became more zealous for their own favourite dogmas. This they called zeal for the

truth; but it was in fact jealousy for their own honour. "The Christian world," says good Mr. *Milner*, "was now the scene of animosity and contention. The orthodox and the heretical did each their utmost to support their several pretensions: practical religion was too much forgotten by both; and the former, from the want, or at least from the very low state of experimental religion, were deprived of the very best method of supporting the truth, by shewing its necessary connection with the foundation of true piety and virtue*."

It is said by an eminent ecclesiastical writer, that, before the time of Constantine, "the Christians had golden priests and wooden chalices; but afterwards golden chalices and wooden priests!"—"Wooden priests!" says Milton, applying the expression to certain priests in his own time, "it had been happy for this land, if your priests had been *only* wooden: . . . they have been to this land not wood, but *wormwood*, that hath infected the third part of our waters, like that apostate star in the Revelation, [so] that many souls have died of their bitterness†."

At first, suppression, fines, imprisonment or banishment, were thought punishments sufficient for Christians to inflict upon each other. It is shocking to think that the first Christian persecution originated in a dispute respecting the manner of the divine subsistence, which none

* *Milner's Church History*, vol. II. p. 54.

† *Animadversions on the Remonstrant's Defence. Milton's prose Works*, vol. II. p. 193.

of the parties pretended to comprehend; and that it was in honour of the Son of God, who prayed for his murderers upon the cross! Constantine was scandalized at it, and attempted to conciliate the parties: but, whatever might be the case at first, the struggle soon became political, and as grossly carnal as any of those among "the princes of the gentiles." The Emperor saw this, but he did not see the remedy. Had he attached no princely revenues, no high pre-eminence to the episcopal office, there might have been religious controversies, and perhaps a deal of low abuse; but the church would not have had the means of persecution: the struggle also would have been weak, had the object been purely spiritual*.

I cannot refrain from observing, before we proceed with the Narrative, that had the first Christian Bishops after the fall of heathenism applied themselves to circulate the scriptures and propagate Christianity, with the same zeal as they did to make creeds and invent ceremonies, and then force them upon their brethren, they might have evangelized the globe. While the Greek and Latin were the living languages of all the civilized world, they possessed advantages which may perhaps never be again enjoyed. Let their neglect, however, be a warning to ourselves, not to let slip opportunities which cannot be recalled.

* "Ah Constantine! of how much ill was cause,
 "Not thy conversion, but those rich domains,
 "That the first wealthy Pope receiv'd of thee."

Dante's 19th Canto of Inferno—translated by Milton.

SECTION II.

THE first Christian Emperors, as I have already hinted, were scandalized by the worldly and intolerant spirit discovered by the Christian clergy; but they also were worldly men, and were soon persuaded to assist the party which most flattered their ambition. In one reign the orthodox triumphed, and the Arians were sent to prison or to banishment; in the next, or perhaps the same reign, the Arians triumphed and the orthodox suffered. But Maximus was the first *Christian* Emperor who stained his purple with the blood of Christians. The Priscillianists had been represented to him as egregious heretics; they had been condemned by the bishops and expelled the church: and if, as their accusers say, they denied the fundamentals of Christianity, they had no claim to a place there. Some orthodox ecclesiastics, indeed, not being satisfied with this, urged Maximus to punish them, and that capitally. I am happy to find, however, that there was *one* Christian prelate in this degenerate age, who had the virtue to protest against such violence. *Martin* Bishop of Tours*, (immortal be his memory!) pleaded eloquently and powerfully against the interference of the civil power in matters of faith and conscience, and for a time prevailed: but at length some other prelates (Spaniards, as I believe and hope;) thirsting for power and for the blood of heretics, prevailed; and Priscillian, with four other leaders of the sect, were put to death; and

* Milner's Church History, vol. II. p. 188.

several more banished. Thus the glory of martyrdom was transferred to the Priscillianists, to the great grief of all true Christians.

But I cannot lead my readers step by step through all the labyrinths of Ecclesiastical History: the squabbles of priests about rites and ceremonies—the new articles of faith manufactured by general or provincial councils—the contentions of secular churchmen for pre-eminence and power—are all written in lines of blood. Antichrist was now advancing by gigantic strides to ascend his throne, and displayed his crimson banners, to the no small terror of the Christian world. In the seventh Century the Pope claimed the title of “universal Bishop,” and began to assume the authority, under the sanction of Phocas, an usurper and a monster, who waded to the throne through the blood of his Sovereign, and of all the imperial family. But I pass all the petty feats of Papal tyranny, to notice its master piece of policy and wickedness, in the erection of the Inquisition.

Saint Dominic, shall I say? *devil Dominic*, was the means of founding this diabolical institution. His mother, it is said, had a dream when she was pregnant with him, and she was silly enough to tell it. She dreamed that she was delivered of a whelp, with a firebrand in his mouth, wherewith he set the world on fire: and never was dream more exact in its accomplishment. Being sent by the Pope into Thoulouse to convert, or rather *destroy* the heretics, Dominic offered plenary indulgences to all who should enlist under his banner; and, as if purposely to insult the Saviour

of mankind, he dressed out his butchers with crosses on their backs. Whole villages, towns and cities were massacred indiscriminately; one of these fiends (Arnold of Cisteaux—whose name is “damned to everlasting fame”) exclaiming, “Slay them all, for the Lord knoweth who are his!” The Earl of Thoulouse, who attempted to intercede for his innocent people, was himself excommunicated, his subjects discharged from their allegiance, his family burnt in one fire, and himself died in prison. But I cannot detail these horrors. The Lord knoweth the murderers of his saints!

From this time the Inquisition was established in many parts of Europe—particularly in Italy, Portugal, and Spain: in which latter country, it has lately been revived. An Inquisition was also erected at Goa, in Portuguese India—for the conversion of the Pagan natives; and this Inquisition subsisted so lately as in 1809, under the protection of British arms!—but is now, as I have been informed, annihilated.

This institution appears at the first to have been erected in express opposition to the spirit of the gospel, and in open defiance of its rules. The very name implies that this court was not only to judge of men’s conduct, but to scrutinize their motives, and to investigate their principles: in short, to assume the prerogative of Deity, and judge the heart. Our Lord had directed that, in the first instance, offenders should be privately admonished, then before two or three witnesses, and lastly be brought before the church. But here all is secret and silent—no man knows his

accuser, or even the charges brought against him. No witness is confronted with the accused; no advocate allowed. If any doubt arise, the torture is applied; and if confession be extorted by the rack, that confession is taken as a proof of guilt—proof sufficient to involve the extreme of punishment. The confinement is solitary to a degree elsewhere unknown; and the last sad relief of distress—the tear and groan are forbidden, and where they cannot be suppressed, are punished. As to Mercy, her sweet smile was never seen within the walls of an Inquisition, nor the music of her voice heard. The sympathies of nature are all suppressed: a mother is not permitted to soothe her tortured child; nor a child to weep over his suffering parent. No letter, no message, can be communicated; nor does any prisoner, till he comes to the last act of the tragedy, the *auto da fe*—(or act of faith, as it is profanely styled) know but that his whole family may be undergoing the same sufferings, or preparing to be burnt at the same time. And for what is all this misery inflicted?—For thinking differently from a priest; or perhaps, for eating meat in Lent.

It is in vain to say, as has been said, that in modern times the inquisitors are men of moral and humane character: Good God! what shall we say of a superstition that case-hardens the soul of man, and annihilates every amiable feeling of human nature! *O Hell!* thou canst not afford an image of this misery, for thy victims are all self-condemned; but this is a hell for innocents and martyrs! and a true Inquisitor is a devil in

the full costume of the infernal regions, surrounded with his own flames!

But I turn from these scenes of horror with shuddering and disgust. As the tempest-tossed mariner hails with joy and gratitude the star which predicts the return of morn; so, on this highly favoured Island, do I with pleasure welcome the rising of the morning star of the Reformation, in the person of *John Wickliffe*, the humble priest of Lutterworth, about the middle of the fourteenth Century.

To estimate the light of Wickliffe, we must advert to the blackness of darkness which covered the moral horison round him. The little learning existing was preserved in the monastic institutions, and that seldom exceeded what was necessary to chaunt their forms of prayer. Some were so ignorant of Greek that *Kyrie eleeson* and *Parateipomena* were taken for saints of the Calendar, and any one who attempted to study that language for a conjuror. To complete the climax (or anticlimax, shall I say?) of ignorance an order of friars had been instituted, called the *Fratres ignorantie* who swore that they would know *nothing*, and never broke their vows*.

Wickliffe began with exposing the folly and wickedness of the monks and friars; but soon discovered more serious errors and abuses; inso-much that he charged the Papists with no less than fifty errors, and raised a numerous and powerful party against the Pope and the court of Rome*. The former he called a "proud worldly

* Jortin's Ecclesiastical History, vol. iii. p. 114.

priest," and even Antichrist, alledging that the taxes paid to him in England amounted to five times as much as the duties demanded by the king. He also reprov'd the inferior clergy for their secular and ambitious tempers, describing the abbots and priors of those times as being attended in their riding with "four-score horse," and with harness of silver and gold, &c.

It may easily be anticipated that this bold reformer roused all the vengeance of the court of Rome; but providence raised him up such potent supporters in the Duke of Lancaster and Earl Percy, that (as Bunyan says) "Giant Pope" could only "sit and gnash his teeth at him," lamenting that such an heretic should die a natural death. After Wickliffe's decease, persecution was excited to a dreadful extent against his followers, and against the Lollards, who were fellow-witnesses of evangelical truth. But I have no pleasure in detailing scenes of blood, and therefore turn to Germany, where I behold *Luther*, like the rising sun, dispelling by his mighty energies, or rather by the mighty energies of divine grace, the clouds and mists of monkish and of Papal darkness.

The circumstances which, in the first instance, called forth these energies seem'd accidental, and

* According to Dr. Fuller, the English Reformer went farther than his predecessors, and in many things symbolized with the Puritans: for he thought it no less than blasphemy to call any but Christ "head of the church;"—he maintained that there were only two orders of the clergy in the primitive times, priests and deacons—that baptism is not essential to salvation, nor can it confer grace, or take away in, &c. *Fuller's Church History*, book. iv. p. 131.

of no great importance. Pope Leo X. having been guilty of some extravagances, wanted money, and recollecting the inexhaustible riches of the Catholic church, in pardons, indulgences, and relics, resolved to turn some of these into money. One of the agents employed in this business was a friar of the name of Tetzel—a true spiritual quack, who boasted that he had pardons to dispose of so extensive, that they would suffice, even if a man had violated the Holy Virgin!

But pardons were not the only merchandize of Rome: relics were at least as profitable. A Dutchman having there confessed himself, procured (as he was told) a leg of the ass on which our Saviour rode into Jerusalem, but was bound on oath not to name it till he got into Germany. No sooner had he entered the borders of the empire than he began to boast of this precious treasure to four of his companions, who thereupon each produced the like valuable relic, and thus made the notable discovery, that this ass had *five* legs. This, however, was nothing to the faith of a Catholic! and indeed nothing wonderful, compared with the articles which follow:—a feather of the wing of the angel Gabriel—the finger of a cherub—the nose of another—some of the rays of the star which appeared to the Magi, and a flame of the burning bush seen by Moses*!!!

These profane follies roused the holy indignation of the great German Reformer, and he was not backward to expose them with a just severity: while Erasmus, uniting in the ridicule, weakened much the superstitious prejudices of the people,

* Cox's Life of Melancthon, p. 85, 87.

though he had neither the zeal nor the integrity of a Reformer. But Luther, born to live amidst the tempest of ecclesiastical controversy, smiled scornfully at the thunders of the Vatican, and laughed at the roaring of the papal bulls. He was, indeed, surrounded with dangers; but, like every instrument employed by heaven, he was "immortal till his work was done." His coadjutors were many and efficient; but I shall name only two, the learned and amiable Melancthon, and the stern, but able and judicious Calvin. The latter name obliges me to advert to a fact, painful to relate, but fraught with much instruction.

It is well known that the doctrine of toleration was one of the heresies which was yet unbroached. The Reformers indeed claimed it for themselves, but it was on the ground that their opinions were scriptural and true; and they denied it to the Socinians and Anabaptists, because their dogmas were false and full of blasphemy; not considering that, under the same charges, they themselves were persecuted by the papists.

There is no doubt but it was the universal opinion among divines of the sixteenth Century, that heresy, especially when it arose to impiety, ought not only to be restrained, but punished by the civil magistrate. Under this impression, the pious and benevolent Cranmer, (for such was eminently his character) urged the young King, Edward VI. to sign the death warrant of the Maid of Kent, and the prince's reluctance and tears were considered only as the effects of juvenile weakness and effeminacy*.

* Burnet's Hist. of the Reform. abr. 8vo. 1683. book. ii. p. 85.

Upon the same principle that Cranmer and his coadjutor acted in England, Calvin sanctioned, and I fear promoted, the death of Servetus, which was so far from being censured, that even the amiable Melancthon was “astonished” that any one could be found “to disapprove of this proceeding*.” Not only so, but Socinus himself (heresiarch as he was) pursued to prison and to death—for he died in prison—his brother heretic Francis David: not from personal animosity, as appears, but from principle†, because, more consistent than his persecutor, he refused to worship Jesus, believing that a mere man, as both considered him, was by no means the legitimate object of religious worship. I know that Socinus pleaded innocent, and some have attempted to justify him, as others have done the venerable Calvin; but I conceive equally in vain. Some things may be said palliative in both cases—both attempted to convert the heretic, and warned him of the consequences; but neither used his influence to prevent the catastrophe, and for the same reason; the right of persecution was then as universally maintained as any article of the

* Cox's Life of Melancthon, p. 524.

† Socinus compares heresiarchs to insane persons, and thinks they ought to be treated in the same way. To prevent cavil, I quote the translation of Dr. Toulmin. “Therefore as we *restrain*, and, if it be necessary *confine* frantic persons, who would otherwise be injurious to others, and at the same time greatly pity them; so an heresiarch of this sort [i. e. one free from sedition and the pursuit of self interest] ought not to be treated with the *utmost* severity, but should meet with pity: and the only thing to be regarded is to hinder his endeavours to propagate his doctrine; and, if it cannot be otherwise done, by *chains and a prison*, [carcere et vinctis.] I speak (adds he) of an obstinate heresiarch; for he who is not obstinate, hath not

Apostle's creed. Thus the severe Calvin and the amiable Melancthon, the gentle Cranmer and the eccentric Socinus, all equally maintained the lawfulness—nay, even the *duty* of persecution, when it was not applied to their own case, or their own party.

SECTION III.

IF we now return to our own country, we shall find that capricious Monarch Henry VIII. hanging and burning Papists and Protestants by turns; and in one or two instances at the same time and place, even while exclaiming bitterly against the wickedness and cruelty of the Pope! In the early part of his reign he had written against Luther, who treated him very roughly in return: this controversy, however, procured him from Rome, the pompous title of “Defender of the Faith,” with many high compliments from that party, which inflated his vanity*, and probably made him think that, as he was defender of the faith, he was the more fit to be “head of the church.” Both characters were no doubt derived from the Jewish Theocracy, which we have already considered, and were supposed sufficient to consti-

contracted that rage and madness that he should be confined in chains.” Gentle Spirit! whenever the names of Calvin and Cranmer are exhibited as persecutors, may thine be associated with them! See *Toulmin's Life of Socinus*, p. 105. *Socini Opera*, tom. I. in *Epistola ad Martinum Vadovitum*, p. 476. See also *Reland's four Treatises concerning the Mahometans*, &c. p. 234.

* Henry, according to the fashion of the times, kept a fool for his amusement, who it is said one day observing him much elated with his new title (Defender of the Faith) very gravely said—“My dear Harry, let thee and me defend each other, and let the faith defend itself.” *Legend of the Velvet Cushion*, p. 62.

tute the vilest of men God's vicegerents upon earth. Henry was indeed the model of a perfect tyrant, and would never hear the plain truth, but from a fool.

The character of Edward VI. formed a direct contrast to that of his father; and though but a lad, he was probably the first person in this country, who formed tolerably correct notions of religious liberty; as appears by his remark to Cranmer, that he thought the burning of Joan Bocher "an instance of the same spirit of cruelty for which the Reformers condemned the Papists." Cranmer persuaded him it was his duty, as God's Lieutenant, to punish heresy and blasphemy; Edward being a minor, signed the fatal warrant weeping, and throwing all the responsibility on his advisers. Excepting this circumstance, and the public agitation occasioned by the suppression of Popery, his short reign was a happy interval of peace and mercy. But his sister, too justly called "the bloody Queen Mary," suddenly reversed the picture when she came into power, rekindled the fires of Smithfield, and with the zeal of a fiend, sacrificed the greatest, the wisest, and the best of her subjects to the Moloch of intolerance. Nor did she spare her own sex,—even under circumstances the most tender and affecting—the pregnant mother, or the sucking infant. O what outrage does persecution offer to all the amiable feelings of human nature! and what a blasphemous idea does it give of the character of God, to suppose that he could endure—much more that he could be gratified with—such sacrifices!

Queen Elizabeth again shifted the scene, but only partially ; for I am sorry to be compelled to say, that she discovered a spirit little less sanguinary than her sister. To the Papists she betrayed a cruel principle of revenge ; and to Lady Jane, and the unhappy Queen of Scots, a want of justice, and of natural affection. But what shall we say of her conduct to the Puritans? Let us look a little into the circumstances of this period, and see with what arguments Protestants can justify the persecution of each other.

The arrogance of the Bishop of Rome, in pretending to be the head of Christ's visible church on earth, had been much complained of ; and the folly of Henry, in adopting the same title, has just been noticed.

Elizabeth perhaps felt the ridicule of giving to the church of Christ a *female* head, and therefore at first hesitated to accept that title*, though she never scrupled to exert the authority it implied. During the preceding reign, many Protestants who had fled to Frankfort, endeavoured to form a church upon the plan delineated (as they supposed) in the New Testament, with no head but Christ ; and upon being invited to return, they began to propagate their principles. But these did not suit the high and ambitious views of Elizabeth, whose masculine talents and disposition qualified her, as she conceived, to govern both the church and state. The Frankfort ministers, some of whom had been dignitaries in King Edward's church, though by no means unanimous

* Burnet's Travels, Letter I. p. 52.

in their opinions, generally desired *purser* forms, and severer discipline, than the Queen had thought proper to establish, and were thence nick-named *Puritans*—as their descendants were called Non-conformists, and since Dissenters. And though this work is by no means intended as an apology for dissent, it is necessary just to state the fundamental principles on which these persons have uniformly acted.

Their first principle is the supreme authority of Christ in his church; and the next is like unto it, the authority of the Scriptures as the supreme law. On these grounds, they particularly objected to the church of England, as assuming a power to “decree rites and ceremonies,” and articles of faith; and yet this objection has been thought not to come with the best grace from those who enjoined catechisms and confessions, as the terms of communion with their brethren. I am not, however, advocating the cause of either party, but detailing unquestionable facts. “Let every man be persuaded in his own mind.” What I have now said may be sufficient to shew that the Puritans acted from principle, and were able to give reasons for their dissent, though they might not be satisfactory to their opponents. But what are arguments to persecutors? “Authority (says John Hales of Eaton,) is not wont to dispute; and it goes hardly with it, when it must defend itself by arguments in the schools*.”

Elizabeth, with the assistance of Parker and other prelates after her own heart, but of whom

* Letter to Archbishop Laud.

she always was the head, proceeded to determine controversies, to denounce heresies, and to decree rites and ceremonies, with as much confidence as either Pope or King had ever done before. Whether these were right or wrong is not so much the question, as the authority by which she acted. Good laws will not establish the right of an illegitimate power, and such was hers considered by the Puritans, in her *ecclesiastical* character, as head of the church. But she had taken possession of the keys, and was determined to admit none into her church, who would not bow to her authority.

Well had it been if matters had rested here; but inheriting the spirit of intolerance from her father, she hung both Papists and Protestants, whenever they refused to obey her: the one for treason, and the other for non-conformity: and if the latter were also heretics, they were liable to be *burnt*, which was actually the fate of two Anabaptists—nine others for the same offence being mercifully banished*.

Some members of the House of Commons presumed to question the legality of her proceedings, and attempted to introduce a bill in favour of the liberty of the subject; but they were soon silenced. In 1592 an Act was passed ordaining, "that if any person above the age of sixteen should refuse attending the reading of the Common Prayer in some church, or should be present at any conventicle under pretence of religion, he should be committed to prison without bail; and

* Chandler's History of Persecution, p. 343. Ivimey's History of the Baptists, vol. I. p. 107.

in case he refused to sign a declaration of conformity within three months, he should abjure the realm, and go into perpetual banishment, on return from which, he was to suffer death without benefit of clergy!" Such were the tender mercies of our Virgin^e Queen; it should in justice be remarked, however, that though she persecuted Protestants at home, she ably protected them abroad—whenever her policy would permit.

King James, her successor, was educated a Presbyterian; he used to call the English service "an evil-said mass, and his own Kirk the sincerest in the world*." It was natural, therefore, that the Presbyterians should expect their 'mickle geud' king should promote them to wealth and power; but they were woefully disappointed. Whether it was that the flattery of the English clergy had turned his weak head (for they called him 'inspired' and 'a second Solomon') or whether he found them more pliable to his schemes of arbitrary power, I presume not to determine: cer-

* In 1590, James VI. as he is called in Scotland, having had some disputes with the presbytery, appeared now perfectly reconciled, and in order to flatter the Assembly, he stood up in their presence, and taking off his bonnet, with his eyes and hands lifted up to heaven, declared "that he praised God that he was horn in the time of the light of the gospel, and in such a place as to be king of such a Kirk, *the sincerest Kirk in the world*. The Kirk of Geneva (said he) keeps Pasque and Yule (i. e. Easter and Christmas.) What have they for them? They have no institutions. As for our neighbour kirk in England, their service is an *evil said mass* in English, they want nothing of the mass but the *liftings* [i. e. of the host.] I charge you my good people, ministers, doctors, elders, nobles, gentlemen, and barons, to stand to your purity, and to exhort the people to do the same; and I forsooth, so long as I brook my life and crown, shall do the same." *Crookshanks's History of the Church of Scotland*, vol. I. p. 11. See *Calderwood's ditto*, p. 256.

tian it is, that he turned his back upon his own church, and became a thorough Episcopalian, and a thorough tyrant. Being the first king who had worn the two crowns of England and Scotland, it is not wonderful that he should feel the blood of royalty trickle through all his veins, and imagine himself sufficiently qualified to make laws and impose taxes. He therefore told his Parliament a few years after his accession, that they were “not to meddle with the main points of government, which would be “to lesson *his craft*, who had been thirty years at the trade in Scotland, and had also served seven years *apprenticeship* in England.” Who can deny that this man was a Solomon?—not indeed the son of David king of Israel; but, as some wicked wits pretended—of David Rizzio, the fidler!

‘Head of the church, Defender of the Faith,’ and, as Whitgift and Bancroft assure us, ‘an inspired preacher,’ he could not be indifferent to the growth of heresy and schism. Under his government, therefore, the high court of the star-chamber, which had been founded in the preceding reign, arose to such a state of glory, as almost to rival the Spanish Inquisition. To the Papists, indeed, he had but one objection—their claim to the right of dethroning kings; but to the Puritans he had many. They were far too precise for a lewd, swearing, tippling king, and he could never bend them to his purpose, and therefore persecuted them throughout his reign. He gave also a specimen of his zeal for orthodoxy in 1611, by burning two heretics, the one at Litchfield, and the other in Smithfield—under the direction of

Bishops King and Neile*. Soon after this shocking event, in 1615, the Baptists claim the honour of having published the first defence of Religious liberty which appeared in this country, intitled "Persecution judged and condemned," which they attribute to a Mr. Helwisse, who had recently returned from Holland, whither he fled from persecution in the preceding reign†.

If we look into Scotland (James's native country) during this period, we find the same arbitrary conduct, with a scene of greater confusion, arising from the king's attempt to overturn that kirk, which he had himself pronounced "the sincerest in the world." He carried however his point so far (at the expence of some bloodshed and much confusion) as to introduce lawn sleeves, and surplices, into Edinburgh‡; and had this for his reward in the *present* world, that in Scotland he was universally hated, and in England generally despised; so that, as good Bishop Burnett says, "No king ever died less lamented, or less esteemed||:" as to another world, God forbid we should pursue him beyond the grave; but we know the reward of persecutors and tyrants—a reward of *debt*, and not of grace.

After all, a certain class of church historians commend this monarch highly, as a most wise, religious and gracious king: of his *wisdom* we have seen sufficient proofs: of his *religion* we

* Neal's History of Puritans, vol. I. 365

† Ivimey's History of the Baptists, vol. I. p. 124.

‡ Crookshanks, vol. I. p. 21.

|| Burnet's History of his own Times, fol. vol. I. p. 17.

have a farther specimen in the *Book of Sports*, issued under his patronage, for the sanctification of the Lord's day; and of his *grace* we have abundant evidence—in the murder of Sir Walter Raleigh!

It was in James's time also that the Synod of Dort was held on the subject of the *five points* between the Calvinists and Arminians; and he gave a fine example of royal consistency in sending ambassadors abroad to support the Calvinists, while at home he patronized the Arminians. The former party carried their cause with a high hand, and the latter were deprived, banished, persecuted. The remonstrants, however, much as they objected to the five points of the Calvinists, had points of their own, of which they were equally tenacious*. Episcopius and his brethren published a confession of faith, declaring that their objections were not so properly to confessions themselves, as to their abuse. They acknowledge also that “there are some things of so great weight and moment, that they cannot be gainsaid without the extreme hazard of our salvation. Freely to contradict these, or quietly to *suffer them to be contradicted* by others, would be the farthest from prudence and charity possible.” So that the principle of toleration, even with this liberal party, and while themselves were complaining of the intolerance of others, was limited to matters of little or no importance†!

But to return to England; Charles I. was cer-

* Mosheim, vol. V. p. 459.

† See the Confessional, ch. iii. p. 40.

tainly superior to his father, both in talents and in moral character: but alas! the blood of all the Stuarts was contaminated with the lust of power; and this prince was very unhappy in falling into the hands of evil counsellors, particularly Laud, under whom all the rigours of the preceding reign were revived and increased. Among the victims of this priest's intolerance, Dr. Leighton (father of the good Archbishop) stands pre-eminent. He wrote against the hierarchy with point and acrimony; yet the sentence of the Star-chamber was so severe, and executed with so much cruelty, as to make him as generally the object of pity as his persecutors were of hatred. — In Scotland “many were exorbitantly fined, unjustly imprisoned, oppressed by soldiers, plundered by dragoons, and a lawless *highland host**. Multitudes were forced to wander about in dens and caves of the earth. Not a few were tortured by *boots*, *thumkins*, fire-matches†, &c. Some were beheaded, others were hanged and quartered; women, as well as men, suffered death; . . . prisons were crowded, and ships were loaded with prisoners who were banished from their native country, of whom many perish-

* The *Highland host* were troops raised by the king's proclamation among the vassals of noblemen and others in the Highlands, and were then considered nearly in the same light as bands of Indians are in North America. See Crookshanks, vol. 1. 458.

† Specimens of similar instruments of torture are still to be seen in the Tower of London, which were brought over from Spain in the Spanish Armada. It might perhaps be an acceptable present to our good ally, Ferdinand of Spain, to return him these useful articles, with a lot of strait waistcoats, and some of the late keepers and managers of Old Bedlam — to fit them on.

ed, &c*.” To get rid of the odium of persecution however, the charge of sedition and rebellion was added to that of Nonconformity, as is usual in all such cases. So when Jezebel wanted the life of Naboth, she hired witnesses to swear that he had blasphemed *God and the King*—and he was stoned to death † !

During these unhappy times the same tyrannical scenes were acted in England, with a small change in the instruments of torture. Particulars would fill a volume, and indeed have filled many. We can only glance at generalities. One natural consequence of tyranny, and especially of *Ecclesiastical* tyranny, is emigration. To worship God according to his conscience is a privilege so dear to the heart of a Christian, that he would go to the world’s end that he might enjoy it. During this and the two preceding reigns, innumerable instances of this occurred, and formed a most unhappy omen for our country. “ Let the astrologer (says Milton) be dismayed at the portentous blaze of comets and impressions in the air, as foretelling troubles and changes to states ; I shall believe there cannot be a more ill-boding sign to nations (God turn the omen from us!) than when the inhabitants, to avoid insufferable grievances at home, are enforced by heaps to forsake their native country ‡ .”

Among the emigrants of this period were the learned Henry Ainsworth, and the excellent John Robinson. The former is reported to have fallen

* Crookshanks pref. p. xi.

† 1 Kings xxi.

‡ Reformation i England, book ii. Works, vol. 1. p. 22.

a martyr to his love of sacred literature, and I would cheerfully spare half a dozen Saints from our calender, to insert his name*. The latter had been educated at Cambridge, and beneficed in Norfolk, but being persecuted and almost ruined in the Ecclesiastical court, he removed to Amsterdam in 1608, and soon after to Leyden, where his congregation was formed nearly on the principles of the Independents of the present age, of whom he is considered as the father. After some years, however, they determined on a farther emigration to America; and the richer part of the church having purchased a small vessel, sailed therein to New England in 1620, and formed a small settlement at New Plymouth. Mr. R. and the rest of the congregation proposed to follow; but in the mean time he was called up to 'another and a better world.' He is considered as one of the first writers who maintained in this country the true principles of Religious Liberty: and there is something so liberal in his address to his congregation before they separated, that I cannot refrain from making an extract.

“Brethren, we are now quickly to part from one another, and whether I may ever live to see your faces upon earth any more, the God of heaven only knows; but whether the Lord has appointed that or no, I charge you before God and his blessed angels, that you follow me no farther than you have seen me follow the Lord Jesus Christ. If God reveal any thing to you by any

* Ainsworth was author of a valuable translation and Commentary on the Pentateuch, Psalms, &c. See *Biog. Brit.*

other instrument of his, be as ready to receive it as ever you was to receive any truth by my ministry; for I am verily persuaded that the Lord has more truths yet to break forth out of his holy word. For my part I cannot sufficiently bewail the condition of the Reformed churches, who are come to a period in religion, and will go at present no farther than the instruments of their reformation. The Lutherans cannot be drawn to go beyond what Luther said; whatever part of his will our God has revealed to Calvin, they will *rather die than embrace it*; and the Calvinists, you see, stick fast where they were left by that great man of God, who yet saw not all things. This is a misery much to be lamented; for though they were burning and shining lights in their times, yet they penetrated not into the whole counsel of God; but were they now living, would be as willing to embrace farther light, as that which they first received. I beseech you remember, it is an article of your church covenant, that *you be ready to receive whatever truth shall be made known to you from the written word of God*.*"

SECTION IV.

BUT we must return to Europe, and prepare for a tale of unutterable misery. In 1641, while Charles I. was engaged in the most unhappy disputes with his parliament, which we pass over as chiefly of a political nature, the news arrived of a terrible massacre in Ireland, to which it was

* Wilson's History and Antiq. of Dissenting Churches, vol. I. p. 33.

strongly suspected that the king was privy; and this suspicion, whether true or false, greatly accelerated the fatal catastrophe which followed*.

In October 1641, "On the day appointed (says Mr. Neal) between 20 and 30,000 of the native Irish appeared in arms in the northern counties, and having secured the principal gentlemen, and seized their effects, they murdered the common people in cold blood†, forcing many thousands to

* That the King countenanced a massacre of this nature is indeed utterly incredible; even their own chiefs complained that they had not the power to restrain them; so dangerous is it to give a license to the passions of barbarians! Yet it seems too evident, that his majesty, or at least the Queen, expected a movement in favour of royalty, excited under foreign influence: and when these enormities took place, the people considered them responsible: and thus, as Clarendon remarks, "This Rebellion proved of infinite disadvantage to the king's affairs." *Clarendon's History*, vol. II. p. 299. See also *Burnet's own Times*, vol. I. p. 41.

† Though I am not disposed to rank the Irish Rebellion of 1798 exactly as a religious persecution, I cannot help remarking, that the same spirit of cold-blooded cruelty in many instances prevailed. I have just been reading the sufferings of Charles Jackson, one of the Methodist Society (if I mistake not) at Wexford, from which I beg leave to subjoin an extract. Having in vain attempted to make his escape, he was seized by six pike-men, and put into Wexford jail with 220 other Protestants. "At the close of this day May 31, (says Jackson) Dick Monk, once a shoe-black, now a captain of rebels, bid us prepare our souls for death by 12 at night. . . . We all went to prayer, and passed the night in the most gloomy suspense. None came near us that night. Two days more passed without my being noticed particularly; but during that time many prisoners were led out, and piked to death." This was repeated at different times, and more prisoners were daily brought in. "June 20th, at four in the afternoon, a horrid noise was heard at the gate, and all the prisoners were demanded. Eighteen or twenty were immediately taken to the bridge of Wexford, and piked to death; and in about half an hour the rebels returned for more victims. In all they took out 98. Those last called out were 17 in No. . . . We were turned into the jail-yard, fell upon our knees, and (strange to tell) some of our murderers did the same, and began to pray. In this situation I heard my

fly from their houses and settlements naked, into bogs and woods, where they perished with hunger and cold. . . . No ties of friendship, neighbourhood, or consanguinity, were capable of

name repeatedly called, and a search was made for me. I was too much agitated to make any answer; and a black-servant among the rebels, meaning to favour me, made signs to me to remain silent. To this delay, as will appear, myself and some few others, owed our lives.

“ The mob, at the outside headed by Dixon, a publican, now a Captain, and his wife, were very clamorous. Matthews [one of the prisoners] put his head out, and was shot dead. On seeing this, Mr. Dixon desired they would desist, that the people who waited on the bridge might have *the pleasure of seeing us*. We were then marched to the bridge; and when in sight, the people almost rent the air with exultations; which, with a violent storm of wind that suddenly rose, a darkened sky, and incessant firing of arms by the undisciplined mob, had an effect the most horrible. I felt as if cold lead was in my veins, a benumbing stupor deadened all my faculties. My mind urged me to implore mercy of heaven, but I could scarcely articulate. . . . When we arrived at the bridge, my 16 fellow prisoners and myself knelt down in a row. The blood of those who had been already executed on this spot (81 in number) had more than stained, it streamed upon the ground around us. They began the bloody tragedy by taking out Mr. Daniel, who, the moment he was touched with their pikes, sprung over the battlements of the bridge into the water, where he was instantly shot. Mr. Robinson was then piked to death. The manner of piking was thus. Two rebels thrust their pikes into the front of the victim, while two others pushed their pikes into his back; and in this state, writhing with torture, he was held up on the pikes till dead, and then thrown into the river. They ripped open Mr. Atkins; who having run some yards in that condition, fell on the side of the bridge, and was piked. Thus they proceeded till they came to me. One then asked me if I would have a priest. On my answering no, he took me by the collar; but he was told to wait till Gurley was finished. While they were torturing him, General Roche rode up in haste, and bid them beat to arms; for Vinegar-hill camp was beset.” This operated like lightning, and saved the lives of Jackson and two others waiting for execution. They were however escorted back to prison till the next day, when they were told that neither man, woman, or child of the Protestants should be left alive. Heaven however disappointed their cruelty;

softening their obdurate hearts, in a cause which they called,—*the cause of loyalty and religion*. . . . Some they whipped to death, others they stripped naked and exposed to shame, and then drove them like herds of swine, to perish in the mountains. . . . Many hundreds were drowned in rivers; some had their throats cut, others were dismembered. With some the execrable villains made themselves sport, trying who could hack the deepest into an Englishman's flesh. Husbands were cut to pieces in the presence of their wives: wives and young virgins abused in the presence of their nearest relations, nay, they taught their children to strip and kill the children of the English, and dash out their brains against the stones. Forty or 50,000 were massacred after this manner in a few days, without distinction of age, sex, or quality; before they suspected their danger, or had time to provide for their defence. In a few weeks the insurrection was so general, that they took possession of whole counties, murdering the inhabitants, plundering their houses, and killing, or driving away their cattle. Multitudes of poor distressed creatures and families fled, naked and half starved, first to Dublin and from thence to England, with death and despair in their countenances. At length the Irish army having ravaged all the northern counties, blocked

but some were heard to *thank God*, that they *had sent so many souls to hell!*—A striking Anecdote is related of the above General Roche, who was a Catholic Priest, and said to a Mr. Fitzhenry, “The long expected time is come at last—when there is to be *but one religion.*” *Protestant Union*, p. 29. For further particulars of this fanatic Rebellion, see *Sir R. Musgrave's History of the Rebellion*.

up the city of Dublin itself, with all the poor distressed Protestants who had taken sanctuary in it; but not being masters of the sea, the city was relieved, and part of the country secured, till the Parliament was at leisure to pour out all their vengeance upon the heads of the murderers, by the hands of the victorious and terrible Oliver Cromwell*.”

This cruel insurrection is believed, first and last, to have cost the lives of from 150, to 200,000 Protestants, though it is sufficiently obvious that in all such cases, no calculation can be accurate, except that of the supreme Judge—“When he maketh inquisition for blood, he remembereth them!”

The melancholy events which followed in the subversion of the monarchy come not within our sphere of observation. On the death of the king, Cromwell rose rapidly to the supreme power; and though in his disposition and conduct sufficiently arbitrary for a tyrant, he appears to have understood and respected the rights of conscience; and, even at the risk of his popularity, shielded some of the most obnoxious of the sectaries from the rage of the Presbyterian clergy†. It might be a question worthy of discussion in another place, how it is that usurpers, like Cromwell, are often more friendly to religious liberty than legitimate sovereigns? But in this case it may be remembered, that the illustrious Milton was the Protector's private Secretary, and it is

* Neal's History of the Puritans, vol. I. p. 593. Parsons's Edition.

† Neal's History, vol. II. p. 401.

probable that his best actions were regulated by his advice.

The late Revolution had completely turned the scale of power against the Episcopalians; and raised the Presbyterians, who had so long been persecuted, to authority and power: and now we shall have an opportunity of seeing *their* liberality and Christian charity to their brethren! But alas! what is man?

“The solemn league and covenant was imposed, and rigorously exacted of all people, as they would escape the brand and penalty of *malignants*. Many of the Episcopal clergy both in the city and country were expelled their livings.” The “Hard Measure” given to the excellent Bishop Hall, in the sequestration of his living, the sale of his effects, the imprisonment of his person, and the treatment of his family*, with the Vandal-like treatment of Cathedral and Parish churches, merit, not only censure, but execration. Yet because the blessed cause of persecution did not advance fast enough, the Corporation of London “presented a remonstrance to the Parliament, desiring a strict course for suppressing all private and separate congregations; that all Anabaptists, heretics, &c. [who] conformed not to the public discipline [might] be declared and proceeded against; that all [should] be required to obey the government settled, or to be settled; and that none disaffected to the Presbyterian Government be employed in any place of public trust.”

“An ordinance of Parliament was also made,

* See Bishop Hall's Works, 8vo. vol. X.

by which every minister that should use the Common Prayer in church or family, was to forfeit £5 for the first time, £10 for the second, and to suffer a year's imprisonment for the third. Also every minister "for every neglect of the Directory"—the Presbyterian service book—"was to pay forty-shillings; and for every contempt of it, by writing or preaching, to forfeit, at the discretion of those before whom he was convicted, any sum not under £5, nor above 50. . . Great restraints also were put upon the *liberty of the press*, by several ordinances made for that purpose; and, to say the truth, when they once got Presbytery established, they used the same methods of suspensions, sequestrations and fines, that the prelatical party had done before; and were as zealous for uniformity in their own covenant and discipline, as the Bishops were for [the] Hierarchy, Liturgy, and Ceremonies*." So true is it, as Milton once wittily said, "New Presbyter is old priest writ large."

The Scotch Divines complained of the slow progress of reformation, as they called it, and were much alarmed at the idea of Toleration: the Lancashire Ministers agreed that it would be "putting a sword into a madman's hand, a cup of poison into the hands of a child," &c†. The London ministers also, to the number of fifty-eight (among whom were seventeen of the Westminster Assembly of Divines) published their testimony against the errors, heresies, and blasphemies of the

* Chandler's Hist. of Pers. p. 381, 2. Neal's Pur. vol. II. p. 48, 112.

† Harmonious Consent of 84 Lancashire Ministers, 1648. p. 12.

times*," among which the error of Toleration is considered as one of the greatest and blackest—"patronizing and promoting all other heresies and blasphemies whatsoever†."

Toleration however, and the rights of conscience had advocates, of the first respectability, among whom were the Poet Milton, and Dr. John Owen. Milton in his *Arcopagitica* (published 1644) pleaded in favour of the Liberty of the Press, with all the strength and eloquence of the English Language; and, in all his writings, defended Toleration: yet both he and Dr. Owen refused to tolerate the Papists. 1. Because they are Idolators—and 2. because their principles are inconsistent with the security of a Protestant Government. The Protector Cromwell carried

* The following character of Toleration is from a zealous Presbyterian, and expressed the general sentiment of the age. "*Toleration* will make the kingdom a chaos, a Babel, another Amsterdam, a Sodom, an Egypt, a Babylon, yea worse than all these: certainly it would be the most provoking sin against God, that ever Parliament was guilty of in this kingdom; it proves the cause and foundation of all kinds of damnable heresies, and blasphemies. Toleration is the grad work of the devil, his master-piece and chief engine he works by at this time, to uphold his tottering kingdom; it is the most compendious, ready, sure way to destroy all religion, lay all waste and bring in all evil; it is a most transcendent, catholique and fundamental evil for this kingdom of any that can be imagined. As original sin is the fundamental sin, all sin having the seed and spawn of all in it; so toleration hath all errors in it, and all evils; it is against the whole stream and current of scripture, both in the Old and New Testament, both in matters of faith and manners, both general and particular commands; it overthrows all relations, both political, ecclesiastical, and æconomical, &c." And speaking of the various sectaries endeavouring to obtain freedom for their own religious opinions, the Author adds, "All the devils in hell, and their instruments, were at work to promote toleration." *T. Edwards's Gangræna*, P. i. p. 57, 58.

† Neal's Puritans, vol. II. p. 263—5.

his liberality so far, as to include all religious denominations (except perhaps the Papists) not unfriendly to morality. At the rising of the Parliament in 1654, he thus reproached them for their intolerance: "Have we not lately (said he) laboured under the weight of persecution, and is it fit then [for it] to sit heavy upon others? Is it ingenuous to ask liberty, and not to give it? What greater hypocrisy, than for those who were oppressed by the Bishops, to become the greatest oppressors themselves, as soon as their yoke is removed? I could wish that those who call for liberty now also, had not too much of that spirit, if the power was in their hands. As for profane persons, blasphemers, and such as preach sedition, &c. . . . their sins being open, make them the subject of the magistrate's sword, who ought not to bear it in vain*."

In the next reign—(for I think it a farce to talk of Charles II.'s reigning while he was hiding in the oak-tree:—in the reign of Charles II. however) a powerful re-action took place: the Bishops once more came into power, and more than 2000 ministers, generally speaking of the best character, were expelled the church, and many of them imprisoned or banished. Even when James II.

* *Neal's Puritans*, vol. II. p. 380.—The following character of Cromwell appears to me admirably sketched, and would perhaps apply to another great man of the present age. "Ambition, 'the sin of the brave,' unhappily gained an ascendancy over him; its poison ulcerated a heart that would once have bled in the cause of its country. Elated with success, and raised to a giddy eminence, 'though greatness became him,' he grew enamoured of its tinsel and its pomp, and sealed perdition on his soul for the bauble of empire." *Legend of the Velvet Cushion*, p. 264.

declared for liberty of conscience to please the Papists, he employed all the means in his power to prevent the Nonconformists from enjoying the same privileges ; nor could they obtain any thing like a legal Toleration till the reign of our illustrious William ; and even then, all Unitarians, and others who could not conscientiously conform to the *doctrinal* articles of the church of England, were still excluded. The present reign has the honour of rendering Toleration complete, so far, at least, as respects the right of religious worship.

SECTION V.

WE have already mentioned the great number of persecuted Christians who sought a refuge in the woods of North America—not less, it has been calculated, than two and twenty thousand. If they did not hope to find a Paradise, they at least expected to find a Patmos. But alas ! they carried with them the spirit of intolerance. Judging from circumstances, we should have said, ‘ Surely these oppressed people will never persecute others, but shew all possible indulgence to tender consciences :’—but it was not so.

The very men who had fled from persecution in this country began to practise it almost as soon as they arrived in America. “ In the first moment they began to taste of Religious Liberty (says Dr. *Robertson*) they forgot that other men had an equal right to enjoy it.” The province of Massachusetts was chiefly peopled by that class of Nonconformists called Independents, and the Baptists (alias Anabaptists, as they were gene-

rally called) were the first victims of their zeal, though in points both of doctrine and discipline they differed less than any other two sects, except on the single point of baptism. Clarke, Crandall and Holmes were the first convicted, and two of them severely fined. The two former had their fines paid for them by their respective friends, but the latter refusing to permit this, was publicly whipped at Boston in 1651*. Among those who had been banished was *Roger Williams*, minister of Salem, who, in consequence, founded a new settlement, which he called Providence, on Rhode Island†. “Williams [excepting his visit to England on business] continued among them upwards of forty years; respected as the father, and the guide of the Colony which he had planted. His spirit differed from that of the Puritans in Massachusetts; it was mild and tolerating; and having ventured himself to reject established opinions, he endeavoured to secure the same liberty to other men, by maintaining that the exercise of private judgment was a natural and sacred right; that the civil magistrate has no compulsive jurisdiction in the concerns of religion; that the punishment of any person on account of his opinions was an encroachment on conscience, and an act of persecution. These humane principles he instilled into his followers; and all who felt or dreaded oppression in other settlements resorted to a community, in which universal Toleration was known to be a funda-

* Ivimey's History of the Baptists, vol. I. p. 207, 208.
Holmes's American Annals, vol. I. p. 229, 236.

mental maxim*.” The Baptist denomination glory in him as having established “the first government on earth, since the reign of Antichrist, which gave equal liberty, civil and religious, to all men therein†.” In 1644, Mr. Williams, then in England, published a book in favour of the heresy of Toleration, and six years afterwards a defence of it, in reply to Mr. Cotton. To this work he added a Letter to Governor Endicot of Massachusetts, who had sanctioned the persecution, in which he plainly tells him: “It is but worldly policy and compliance with men and times (God’s mercy over-ruling) that holds your hands from murdering of thousands and ten thousands, were your power and command as great as once the bloody Roman Emperors’ was. The truth is (and yourself and others have said it) by your principles, such whom you account heretics, blasphemers, seducers, ought to be put to *death*; you cannot be faithful to your principles and consciences, if you satisfy them but with imprisoning, fining, whipping and banishing the heretics, and by saying that banishing is a *kind* of death, as some chief with you (in my case formerly) have said it‡.” We shall now see how this prediction was fulfilled.

* Robertson’s History of America, (12th edition) vol. IV. p. 301.

† Ivimey’s History of Baptists, vol. I. p. 219. From Bachus’s History of America.

‡ Mr. Williams’s first publication was entitled “The bloody tenent of persecution for the cause of conscience.” Mr. Cotton’s answer (according to the quaint taste of the times) was called, “The bloody tenent washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb”—a title that we should think bordering on blasphemy! and Mr. Williams’s reply was called, “The bloody tenent yet more bloody!” from which

In 1656 a law was passed by the same Independent settlement of Massachusetts, prohibiting any Quakers from being brought into the colony; and one Nicholas Upsball (whose name merits preservation) for warning his Independent brethren of the consequences of such conduct, was fined £23, and banished out of their jurisdiction. Quakers however still came into Massachusetts, and about two years after this, it was thought necessary to make a severe act upon the subject—the model of which is to be found in the very law by which they themselves had been banished from the mother country. This act ordained, that whosoever should introduce a Quaker into the Colony should forfeit £100. and that any one who should conceal or entertain such an one, should be fined forty-shillings *per hour*, while he thus protected him. As to the Quakers themselves, every male should for the first offence have one ear cut off, and be sent to work in the house of correction; for the second the other ear, and be sent back to the same confinement. Women, for the two first offences were to be severely whipped, and confined to hard labour as the men. For the third offence, either sex was to have the tongue bored through with a hot iron, and to be sent back to slavery!

These laws, though executed with a severity even beyond the letter, were yet found insuf-

(pp. 311, 312.) the above extract is taken. It was a fundamental article in the Constitution of his settlement, that “every man who submits peaceably to the civil authority, may peaceably worship God according to the dictates of his own conscience, without molestation.” *Trumbull’s History of America*, vol. 1. p. 105.

ñicient to keep away these unwelcome visitors; therefore sundry ministers of the *Independent* denomination (mark that!) petitioned to have their crime made capital, and it was in consequence made banishment “upon *pain of death**.” Three men and one woman were actually *hanged* at Boston†, and the persecution would have gone on, but for a *mandamus* from King Charles II. who conceived that the right of persecution belonged exclusively to him.

Dr. Chandler adds: “It would be endless to recount all the cruelties they [the Independents] used to these poor people [the Quakers,] whom they imprisoned, unmercifully whipped, oppressed with fines, and then condemned them to be sold to the plantations, to answer the fines they had laid

* The preamble to this act is so curious that I cannot forbear sub-joining it in a Note. “Whereas there is a pernicious sect, commonly called *Quakers*, lately risen, who by word and writing have published and maintained many dangerous and horrid tenets, and do take upon them to change and alter the received laudable customs of our nation in giving civil respect to equals, or reverence to superiors, whose actions tend to undermine the civil government, and also to destroy the order of the churches, by denying all *established* forms of worship, and by withdrawing from orderly church fellowship, allowed and approved by all *orthodox* professors of the truth—whereby divers of our inhabitants have been infected; for prevention thereof, this Court doth order and enact, that every person or persons of the *cursed sect* of the Quakers, who is *not* an inhabitant of, but is found within this jurisdiction, shall be apprehended without warrant, where no magistrate is at hand, by any constable, commissioner, or select man—who shall commit the said person to close prison, there to remain without bail, until the next court of assistants, where they shall have a legal trial: and being convicted to be of the sect of the Quakers, shall be sentenced to be banished, *upon pain of death*.”—The Act goes on to inflict the like punishment upon *inhabitants* found guilty of the same offence.

† Holmes’s American Annals, vol. I. p. 312. London Edition.

upon them. But enough has been said to shew the inhumanity of their spirit and practice, and to raise in the reader an abhorrence and detestation of such a conduct in men, who, though they had been persecuted themselves, carried the principles of persecution with them into the place of banishment, and used worse severities towards others for conscience sake, than what they themselves had experienced from the bitterest of their enemies*.”

SECTION VI.

HAVING thus given, as I conceive, a pretty fair sketch of the rise and progress of Persecution in Germany, England and America, among Papists, Protestants, Episcopalians, Presbyterians, and Independents, we have so balanced the account, that I think they will find little occasion to reproach each other, or to blame the writer for partiality. Let us now again for a moment, turn our eyes to the continent of Europe, where we shall find Popery re-established in all its glory.

One of the first consequences of the fall of Bonaparte was the Pope's restoration in state and triumph, under the protection of British valour, and (as we are told in the public prints) by the assistance of British gold. One of his first acts was the suppression of the reformed religion in Italy, and the shutting up the churches of the Protestants in Venice, Naples, and other places, where they had been protected by Murat. In the next place, he restored the order of the

* Chandler's History of Persecution, p. 401, 402.

Jesuits, the most active, and the most dangerous of their enemies; and if we may believe the French Papers (published under the immediate inspection of Government,) “his Holiness reclaims from the Catholic Sovereigns the re-establishment of several [other] religious orders in their dominions*.” Beside all this, Pious VII. has restored the Inquisition, and the congregation *de Propagandi*.

As to *Spain*, persecution is in so much repute there, that it should seem the good Catholics would sooner suffer it themselves than allow it to be extinct. The Inquisition is their idol; and we have seen lately, that they could hardly permit themselves to be liberated from the French before they flew to the sacred chamber, and placed their lives and consciences under the care of the holy fathers.

The King re-entered Madrid, May 14th. 1814. amid shouts of “Long live Ferdinand! Perish the Constitution!”—July 21, he issued a decree which thus begins: “The glorious title of *Catholic*, which distinguishes us from among all other Christian princes, is owing to the perseverance of the Kings of Spain, who would *never tolerate* in their states *any other* religion than the Catholic, Apostolic and Roman.”—The decree then proceeds in the following strong censure of our brave countrymen, who had just rescued them from the jaws of the French Leviathan: “The long abode which has been made in Spain by troops of different *sects*, almost all of whom were infested with

* See Orthodox Journal, 1815, p. 473.

sentiments of hatred against our religion; the *disorder* which has been the infallible result of this," &c. &c. Such are the reasons given for re-establishing the tribunal of the Holy Office, which is truly represented as the chief cause that preserved that country from the Reformation of the sixteenth century. The whole of this monarch's conduct since his return appears to me perfectly consistent with his principles, and furnishes the most complete specimen of genuine Popery, uncorrected by knowledge, and unrestrained by humanity.

In *France*, however, so long enlightened by science, and so much refined in manners, we should expect something better: let us glance then at its *Ecclesiastical History* for the two last centuries.

The Reformation in France began about the same time as that in Germany. Francis I. was the first persecutor of the Protestants; but Francis II. so far exceeded him in cruelty, that Beza says, in his short reign "Satan's rage arose to an extreme height:" But he had not then witnessed the event which we are now about to relate. It was on occasion of a marriage, a *royal* marriage, that this horrid event took place—and in the dead of the night of the eve of St. Bartholomew, August 24th, 1572.—I shall recite the words of an eye-witness of no less rank and respectability than the Duke of Sully.

"If I were inclined (says he) to increase the general horror inspired by an action so barbarous, . . . I should in this place enlarge on the number, the quality, the virtues, and great talents of

those murdered on this horrible day, as well in Paris, as in every other part of the kingdom. I have writings still in my hands, which would confirm the report of the Court of France having made the most pressing solicitations to the neighbouring Courts, to follow its example with regard to the Protestants, or at least, to refuse an asylum to those unfortunate people. . . . But I would, were it in my power, forever obliterate the memory of a day that divine vengeance made France groan for, by a continual succession of misfortunes, blood and horror, during six and twenty years."—Here one would think Sully were speaking of *our times*, for it is just six and twenty years since the commencement of the French Revolution!—But he proceeds:

“ I was in bed, and awakened from sleep three hours after midnight, by the sound of all the bells, and the confused cries of the populace. My governor, St. Julian, with my valet de chambre, went hastily out to know the cause; and I never afterwards heard more of them. They were, without doubt, some of the first that were sacrificed to the public fury. I continued alone in my chamber dressing myself, when, in a few minutes I saw my Landlord enter, pale and confused. He was of the Reformed religion, and had consented to go to mass, to save his house from being pillaged, and his life from destruction. He came to persuade me to do the same, and to take me with him. I did not follow him, but resolved to try if I could gain the college of Burgundy, where I had studied; though the great distance I was then from the college made the attempt

very dangerous. Having disguised myself in a scholar's gown, I put a large prayer-book under my arm, and went into the street. I was seized with horror inexpressible at the sight of the furious murderers, who, running from all parts, forced open the houses, and cried, "Kill—kill—massacre the Huguenots!" The blood I saw shed before my eyes redoubled my terror. I fell into the midst of a body of guards, who stopped me, interrogated me, and were beginning to use me ill, when, happily for me, the book which I carried was perceived, and served me for a passport. Twice after this I fell into the same danger, from which I extricated myself with the same good fortune. — At last I arrived at the college of Burgundy, when a danger still greater than any I had yet met with awaited me. The porter having twice refused me entrance, I continued standing in the midst of the street, at the mercy of the furious murderers, whose numbers encreased every moment, and who were evidently seeking for their prey. I prevailed on the porter to let me in for a few pieces of money, when two inhuman priests wanted to force me from him, to cut me to pieces, saying the order was *not to spare even infants at the breast*. . . . The King of Navarre was obliged to go to mass; if he had refused he would have been murdered. I was advised to do the same. The King and the Prince of Conde were awaked two hours before day by armed soldiers, who rushing into their room, carried them to King Charles, who immediately commanded them to go to mass, or suffer as criminals and rebels.

“It was not long (says my author) before Charles felt the most violent remorse, for the barbarity to which he had given the sanction of his name. From the evening of the 24th of August, he was observed to groan involuntarily, at the recital of a thousand cruelties practised on that occasion. The number of Protestants murdered during eight days, over all the kingdom, amounted to 70,000* :”—Other accounts say an hundred thousand.

In this awful tragedy there is no doubt but the Duke of Guise and the Queen-mother were the chief actors : but Charles did more than lend his name. He fired on some of the fugitives from a window, and cried out — “ Kill—kill ! ” to encourage the carnage. It has been said his young heart could not be so base (for he was but twenty two) but his wicked mother excited him to the fact. God, however, did not excuse the son. You have heard of his involuntary groans ; and it was not long after this that he was seized with a strange disorder, and died, bathed in the blood which issued from his own body, and which the physicians could by no means staunch. His mind grew melancholy, and musicians were sent from afar to charm him—but alas ! what music can charm away the terrors of a guilty conscience ?

The only relief his majesty could find was in the conversation of his old Huguenot nurse, who, by some means had been spared amidst the general massacre. As his last hours approached he wept bitterly. “ Ah ! my dear nurse (said he)

* Sully's Memoirs, vol. I. book. i. 12mo.

What blood! what murders! Ah! I have followed wicked advice! I know not where I am—they have so perplexed and agitated me.—How will all this end? What shall I do?—I am lost forever—I know it!”—The pious nurse replied, full of the spirit of her religion—“Sire! the murders be upon those who compelled you to order them! Since you never consented to them,” (so I suppose he pretended) “and now regret them, God will never impute them to you; but will cover them with the mantle of the righteousness of his Son—to whom alone you should now look for help*.” Excellent advice! but who would not rather have been martyred in the streets, than have died in these horrors?—“Verily there is a God in heaven that executeth judgment!”

But there was a monster who did not feel remorse. Tavannes, marshal of France, rode through Paris during the massacre, crying to his men—“Let blood! let blood!—bleeding is as salutary in August as in May.” When this wretch came to die, he sent for a priest to hear his confession; but the priest (who was not a *thorough Catholic*) hearing no allusion to this event, and knowing the sanguinary part he acted in it, exclaimed with astonishment—“What! no mention of the massacre of St. Bartholomew!”—“That (replied Tavannes) I consider as a meritorious action that will wash away my sins†!”

* See *Curiosities of Literature*, vol. II. p. 330.

† In a similar way died the French Chancellor Tellier, who immediately after he had signed the decree for revoking the edict of Nantz, began to sing “Now Lord, lettest thou thy servant depart

And such, no doubt, Pope Gregory XIII. considered it, who ordered a public thanksgiving to God on that occasion.

I cannot detail the miseries which followed this event. But the Protestants obtained no legal toleration in France till the edict of Nantz, which was issued by Henry IV. in order to pacify his Protestant subjects, after he had changed his religion to secure his crown. This edict, considered as the Toleration act of France, was declared irrevocable, and so it was till Louis XIV. was persuaded to revoke it, in 1685. Under this act, however, the Protestant religion flourished for nearly 90 years; but now a scene opens of enormity almost equal to the preceding. The Reformed throughout France were required to abjure their profession and embrace Popery; or, if they refused to turn, dragoons were quartered upon them, who consumed their substance, tortured their persons, and murdered their families at pleasure. Those who fled were pursued; and those who petitioned were thrown into prison, and suffered there to starve. Their churches were demolished, their ministers executed, or banished, and indeed happy were they who could thus escape. By these means the King lost (as it is calculated) 150,000 of his best and most useful subjects; and we (among others) gained a great number of their most ingenious and industrious manufacturers.

After this dreadful storm subsided, a remnant

in peace," and so, according to his eulogist, "went singing on to heaven!" — Surely this writer did not believe that there is a hell.

of the Reformed were suffered to remain in France upon condition of keeping their religion private, and attempting no worship different from that of the church of Rome, out of which neither marriages were to be solemnized, nor children baptized; nor were they even suffered to instruct their offspring in the principles of their own confession.

In 1724, Louis XV. put forth a declaration enforcing and explaining the state of the laws, and at the same time increasing their severity, by making it death to hold any assemblies for worship according to the Reformed religion, and condemning to the galleys those who attempted to conceal them. "This edict," says Mr. Laval, in the middle of the eighteenth century—"This edict is the standing law by which the Reformed are tried. The least transgression against any of the articles is punished with all the severity of the law; and not one year passes without instances of some that have been hanged, or others sent to the galleys, or others shut up for their lives in some noisome places, or others that are obliged to pay large fines for the least offence; and even last year," adds he—that is in 1742,—“we had no less than thirty-five men and women [condemned,] some of whom were hung; others sent to the galleys, for life, and others shut up in the tower of Constance, only on account of their religion*.”

In 1762, Mr. Rochette, a Protestant minister, was hanged, and three young noblemen of the

* Laval's History of the Reformation, quoted Griffin's Evils of Persecution, p. 20.

name of Grenier beheaded, merely for their religion. It was not, however, an uncommon thing to bring other accusations to cover their design;—as witness the family of Calas*.

In 1765, an assembly of French bishops† complained of the apathy of the King. “It is in vain (said they) that the exercise of any other than the Roman Catholic Religion is prohibited in your dominions. In contempt of your laws, the Protestants are raising tumults in every part. If the law which revoked the Edict of Nantz—If your declaration of 1724, had been strictly observed,

* John Calas, a respectable Merchant of Toulouse had a Son, who, in a fit of melancholy as is supposed, hanged himself; and his father at the age of seventy was accused of hanging him for fear he should turn Catholic. Without any proof therefore, the father was broken on the wheel, and the rest of the family either banished or imprisoned. The sentence was indeed afterwards reversed; but this could not restore the murdered victims of intolerance.

† I am sorry to fasten this reproach upon the Clergy; but I fear all persecution begins with them. “I am perplexed,” said Louis XV. one day to the prince of Beauveau, “respecting the reclamations of these Protestants; they appear to me so well founded, that I cannot but pity these poor people; and yet *the clergy are continually complaining of them.*” Miss H. M. Williams on the late persecution of the Protestants in France, p. 26. “How often” says this popular writer, since my residence in France, have I listened to the narrative of the sufferings of the Protestants! . . . when they assembled in caves and deserts, to celebrate divine worship! when pious families shrouded by the night, bent their way amidst darkness and danger toward the spot assigned for their religious ceremonies; a dark-lantern guiding their perilous steps. Arrived at their temple amidst the rocks, two walking sticks hastily stuck in the ground, and covered with a black-silk apron of the female auditors, formed what was called the pulpit of the desert. To such an assembly how eloquent must have appeared the lessons of that preacher, who braved death at every word he uttered! How impressive must have been that divine service, the uttering of which incurred the penalty of fetters for life! These were the glorious days of Protestantism in France; these were her proudest triumphs!” *Ibid*, p. 19, 20.

we venture to affirm there would be no more Calvinists in France." They conclude therefore by urging the government to awaken new persecutions. "Give, Sire, to the laws all their force, and to religion all its splendour, that the revival of your declaration of 1724, may be the result of our humble remonstrance."

Such was the state of the French Protestants to the moment of the Revolution, which threw down the Bastille, and proclaimed universal liberty. Too soon, however, did it appear that France was not yet prepared to enjoy liberty, either civil or religious. Even the infidel party, who had so long and so justly reproached the Catholics for persecuting the Reformed, now commenced a new scene of persecution against Christianity itself. Having decreed that death was "an eternal sleep," they seemed to have felt no more remorse in the slaughter of their countrymen, than if they were literally putting them to sleep; and a persecution thus arose not less dreadful than those of Rome itself.

At this time the clergy, who had a few years before attempted to raise a new persecution against the Protestants, now fled to England to seek a refuge among them. Much kindness was shewn them, both by the government and the clergy; and more, as some Protestants thought, than was either merited or prudent; but little did the generosity of Britons suspect, that these men would again go back to kindle new animosities against the religion which so long cherished them.

To return however to the history of the French Revolution, Bonaparte who had triumphed over

all the successive parties which preceded him, when he assumed the government, attempted to establish universal Liberty of Conscience, and on that principle, although himself a man of no religion, shewed an evident preference to the Protestants.

In 1808, in his reply to the Address of the Protestant Consistory at Paris, he said: "I guarantee to you for myself and successors, not only the independence, but also the most perfect freedom and inviolability of your worship. The Protestants have always proved themselves to be good citizens, and faithful subjects of the laws." Again he shewed the same partialities in his conference with the clergy of Breda in 1810. "You have calumniated the Protestants" said he, in his address to the Catholics, "by representing them as preaching doctrines dangerous to the state; but the best subjects I have are Protestants."

This partiality is not difficult to be accounted for. The Pope he considered as a rival, equally arbitrary and ambitious with himself; and wished therefore to confine him to his spiritual concerns. He thought the interests of the Protestants were also connected with his own: for at the suppression of the monasteries, they had purchased for their worship many of the monastic churches; it was natural for them therefore to adhere to a man who was likely to protect them in their possessions, and the rights of conscience. Farther, the Protestants, at least the more pious of them, were not men of aspiring politics; but seeking a better country, were the less likely to disturb his ambitious projects.

On the other hand, the house of Bourbon was known to be strongly attached to the Catholic religion, and to all its immunities, which they were not backward to restore on their return. Under these circumstances, it is not surprizing, if some of the Protestants expressed an anxiety for their religious liberties, or shewed symptoms of joy on the return of their protector from the Isle of Elba*. It does not appear, however, that they were concerned in the plot to bring him back, or took any measures to expel the royal family. When therefore that weak enthusiast, Chateaubriand, referred the late persecution to causes wholly political, it is said the King of Prussia, who was present, contradicted him. "You are wrong, Sir, (said his Majesty) these crimes cannot be covered; and if the Protestants have been friends to the Revolution, it gave them rights which they scarcely had an idea of; and they perhaps saw too clearly what they were threatened with by the fanaticism of some incendiaries†." The events here alluded to are thus related by a French Protestant Minister on the spot.

"Scarcely was Louis [the 18th] arrived the second time in the capital of his kingdom, when some wicked persons attempted to foment divisions among the Catholics and Protestants [in the South,] who had, generally speaking, lived in the greatest harmony for many years. They began

* A respectable merchant residing on the Continent, informs me that he made the tour of the South of France about eight years since, and even then, nothing but the iron hand of Bonaparte could keep the Catholics from persecution.

† Oracle, Nov. 18, 1815.

by spreading false alarms, and asserting the most infamous things, until they succeeded in making a general impression on the public mind, that the King would, in future, suffer no religion but the Roman Catholic to exist in France. You may form an idea of the terror this excited in thousands of families, whom the providence of God had again settled in this fine country, since the revocation of the edict of Nantz. Our children, our property, our churches, and our local comforts, all appeared to be at stake. Protestants trembled with dark suspicions concerning their neighbours;—the horrors of assassination, massacre, and expatriation, whether sleeping or waking, were continually before our eyes. Superstition and fanaticism, taking advantage of this alarm, came forth from the tombs, where for twenty five years they had been concealed; and alas! were once more permitted, by a mysterious providence, to re-kindle their expiring torches, and march through the kingdom, spreading terror and devastation on every side*.

“The South of France was thrown into the most horrible confusion; the old cry of *enemies to church and state* was revived, the Protestants were stigmatized as Bonapartists; and the most abandoned wretches, having branded them with an opprobrious name, conceived that, by hunting them down with unabated cruelty, they should merit the name of Bourbonists, and make their

* One of the means of exciting persecution among the lower orders appears to have been the chanting execrable songs, and shouting through the streets, such sentiments as these—“Let us wash our hands in the blood of the Protestants—Vive la St. Barthélemi!”

slaughtered corpses the stepping stones to favour and to power*.”

It is not for me to enter into the particulars of this calamitous event, which persons have viewed differently, accordingly as they have been warped by their respective systems. That outrages have been committed, is indisputable from the ordinance of the King himself, which states,—“ That an atrocious crime has sullied our city of Nismes: that, in defiance of the Constitutional Charter, which recognizes the Catholic Religion as the religion of the state; but which guarantees to other worshippers protection and liberty, a seditious mob has dared to oppose the opening of the Protestant temples. Our military Commandant, in endeavouring to disperse them by persuasion, before resorting to force, has been assassinated, and his assassin has sought an asylum against the pursuit of Justice.”

A popular but impartial writer (on this subject, I mean) states that these outrages assumed the nature of a religious persecution.

“ The persecutors of the 19th century (says Miss H. M. Williams,) have marked their victims; have plundered and murdered as their fury directed, wherever they found Protestant property and Protestant faith. Protestants alone have been the victims.—Had it been a local insurrection, as in the time of the revolution, the assailants would not have been so discriminate. It is on Protestants alone that the rage has fallen, and

* Cobbins Statements, &c. Second Edition, p. 104.— Resolutions and Statements of the Protestant Dissenting Ministers, p. 18.

this appears as an unequivocal proof that it was an *organized religious persecution*.

“ Their foulest enemies can bring no charges against the Protestants. Their conduct since the epocha which confirmed their rights should have disarmed their most rigorous foes; they shewed no exultation, and sought no private advantage.

“ But by an oversight in the King’s Charter there was mention of a *State Religion*, and the Protestants were obliged to sink back to *toleration*. The Charter had been less favourable than the Concordats*.”

But by far the most important and authentic document on this subject is the *Report* of the Rev. *Clement Perrot*, a Protestant Minister of Jersey, who personally, and on the spot, ascertained the facts and dates, with the names of many of the victims, of which Report the following is a summary.

“ More than *two thousand* persons have been plundered and subject to forced contributions, and between 2 and 300 murdered.—More than *ninety* country-houses, belonging to the *Protestants*, have been destroyed.—Two or three temples have been burnt, and more than *one hundred and fifty* houses have been pillaged within the city of Nismes.—More than *thirty* females have been stripped naked in the streets, and tortured so dreadfully that eight are dead. Manufactories have been destroyed, and the vines of some vineyards torn up by the roots; so that the whole

* Quoted from the Report of the Three Denominations, April 1, 1816. Appended to several Periodical Works. The Letter has been since published by Underwood. See pp. 6, 7, &c.

damage to property is estimated at four millions of francs. The city of Nismes have been taxed 400,000 francs, for its part of the contribution of 100 millions, a list of 174 persons who were liable was made, in which there were 147 Protestants, 10 Jews, and only 17 Catholics*.

The violence of this persecution has at length subsided, but the country has by no means returned to its former state of tranquility. So lately as the middle of July (1816,) we have the following extract from the Correspondence of the "Three denominations of Dissenters."

"The affairs of our brethren in the South of France go on very badly. I have received several letters, which, by the allegories that the writers feel themselves compelled to employ, and the ambiguous expressions they use, prove the state of anxiety in which they remain. In the department of the Gard, and particularly at Nismes, the utmost dread oppresses the Protestant population. 'We are tranquil,' says a correspondent, 'but ours is the tranquility of a person who has been nearly bled to death. If our persecutors do not go to the same lengths they formerly and so recently did, impute it only to the lassitude of murderers, and the wealth amassed by the devastators and spoliators of our property. Harmless Protestants, unarmed, so weighed down by terror that they dare not speak to one another, and are even afraid of mingling their tears together, whom

* Report on the Persecutions of the French Protestants, presented to the Committee of the Three Denominations. (1816.) p. 17. &c. To deny the existence of persecution in the teeth of facts like those, must imply equally the want of sense, decency, and feeling.

‘dread compels to relinquish the endearing intercourse of intimacy and relationship—are arbitrarily arrested—false witnesses are not wanting—and imprisonments, fines, and marks of dishonour follow.’”

Thus while the greatest tenderness has been shown to Catholic persecutors, on account of their loyalty to the Bourbon family, nine reputed Protestants have been condemned for the tumult which previously took place at Arpaillargnes on the capitulation of the Duke D’Angouleme, which has afforded no small triumph to the Catholics, though we are assured they acted only in their own defence. The account published by “the Three Denominations” above referred to I shall subjoin below*, and only observe, that

* “The judgment of the 11th of July has filled the Protestants with horror, and the Catholics with proportionate delight. Eleven persons have been accused, nine men and two women; ten were Protestants, and one was a Catholic, *six men and two women have been condemned to death*, four to be executed at Nismes, and four at Arpaillargnes; one is condemned to the galleys for life, and two have been acquitted;—the Catholic is one of the two acquitted, and one of the magistrates was known to say, that they would not have acquitted one Protestant, but for the sake of the Catholic; but to acquit him (the Catholic) alone would appear too partial.

“The trial was held in the Hall of Assize, and the Catholic ladies, dressed, filled the most prominent and elevated seats. The Hall was filled by the fanatical populace—no Protestants dared venture to be present at the trial—nor were there any Protestants on the Jury; but while the Jury was sitting fifteen or sixteen hours on the various cases, hundreds of the fanatics, who had pillaged and assailed the Protestants, surrounded the house all night, crying out for their condemnation and their death.

“By a perversion worthy of the parties who are thus carrying on their system of exclusive punishment, these wretched beings have been judged as though they had assassinated a person on the highway, while all the world knows, that the affair in which they were en-

when persecutors are determined on cruelty, they never want pretences. So said Pharoah of old to the Israelites — “Ye are idle, ye are idle” — when he had resolved to oppress and to enslave them.

Nor does it appear that the Catholics in France are by any means reconciled to the Toleration of Protestants, though they can plead so powerfully here,—not for Toleration only, but for political power. In a letter from Colonel Count de Bernis, (one of the Deputies of the Gard,) to his Royal Highness the Duke of Angouleme, dated in the end of last January we have the following sentiment: “I believe it absolutely necessary that *one* of the parties be *definitively crushed*, and prevented from measuring its strength with the other. Its chiefs must be in our power; for the Bonapartists in the Gard are more dangerous than any where else, because of the *pretext of religion*. This is the *only way* to establish tranquility for the future*.” So that if the Count de Bernis is listened to, we may expect to have more massacres, though perhaps in a more legal form.

Nor is it in the South of France only that Protestants have suffered; but among the Vaudois also, the descendants of the Waldenses in Piedmont†. When persecuted by the house of Savoy in the

gaged was tumultuous, and occasioned by the alarm of the poor unfortunate villagers, and the misconduct of the Royal Volunteers.” *Report*, Sept. 1, 1816.

* Perrot’s Report, p. 66.

† Report of the Protestant Society for the Protection of Religious Liberty, May 1816. Morgan’s Sketch of the past and present state of the Vaudois, 1816. And a brief Memoir of the Waldenses by a Clergyman, 1815. (Seeley.)

17th century, they were assisted by a royal grant from England, which ceased on the conquest of their country by the French; then however they obtained the privileges of French Citizens; but since the restoration of their antient government their persecutions have been renewed, and their distresses are become extreme, and that, as far as appears, solely on the account of their being Protestants.

With respect to the politics of the Protestants, I believe they differ in France pretty much as they do in England, and always will do, when men are allowed to think for themselves. As to the emperor I should suppose none of them considered him as a man of any religious principle; and in the conscriptions, and other public burdens, they had their full share. Many of them therefore hailed the return of Louis with rapture, and partook the general joy. One of the Pastors of Nismes for instance thus exults on the occasion: "Yes, Christians, we captives are delivered; our King, our Princes are restored to us; may our love and our devotion contribute to efface from their souls the remembrance of past misfortunes. Yes, peace is established in all Europe!—may the magnanimous Sovereigns, and the generous people, who have so powerfully concurred to restore and confirm it upon the solid basis of wisdom, equity, and union, long enjoy its blessings, as well as ourselves! And in offering to them the tribute of our vows, and of our thanks; let us not forget in our gratitude, our chiefs, our warriors, our magistrates; those, in particular, who reside among us as the organs of law, and the de-

positaries of power. Our happiness, my brethren, I am delighted to say, is not a dream: it is expressed in two words—the *Bourbons* and peace* !”

But alas ! it *was* a dream, and but a short one. Some anticipated this, and rejoiced with trembling; and, if at the same time they recollected the promise of the man, who said “I guarantee the inviolability of your worship,” and in this instance kept his word, and felt a degree of gratitude for his protection, we should not reckon their gratitude among their vices.

But where is their gratitude to the Bourbons? and where, I ask, are their obligations? I speak of Protestants as a religious sect. Henry IV. was indeed their friend, but he deserted their religion. And though Louis XIII. confirmed the Edict of Nantz, he took away the cautionary towns which had been given for their security, and left them wholly to the mercy of his successors. To Louis XIV. they were indebted for dragooning them out of their property, their religion, and their lives. To Louis XV. they are indebted for prohibiting their worship, proscribing their ministers, and bastardizing their children. Of their obligations to Louis XVI. I know but little, though I believe his natural dispositions were benevolent and kind; and their obligations to Louis XVIII. I presume are yet to come. May they be many and impressive; and I doubt not but they will meet with due returns of gratitude !

* Extract from a Thanksgiving Sermon of Mr. H. F. Juillerat, Appendix to Perrot's Report, p. 76.

CONCLUSION.

IN the preceding Essays we have considered the Christian church as built on a union of affection, and of sentiment, so far as respects the fundamentals of religion; but as by no means requiring a perfect uniformity of opinion or of religious rites: 2. We have viewed the Terms of Communion as embracing *all* true Christians (in the judgment of Christian charity) and no others. 3. We have considered free enquiry in matters of religion as the duty of all men, and especially of Christians; and have established their right to the exercise of private judgment and public opinion. 4. We have proved the spiritual nature of Christ's kingdom, as not conferring, either on ministers or magistrates, any authority to restrain religious worship, or repress public opinion. 5. We have considered the hateful nature of Intolerance, and its consequences to individuals and society: and lastly, we have taken a historical glance at its rise and progress to the present time. It remains now to consider the subject, 1. In relation to present circumstances, and the Catholic Question; and, 2. In reference to future events, as delineated in Scripture Prophecy, and referring, in particular, to the downfall of Popery.

1. Considering the subject in relation to present circumstances, I cannot but think, that any denomination claims Religious Liberty with an ill grace, while it refuses that liberty to others. Now I wish it to be distinctly understood, that I do *not* deny that there are individuals in the church

of Rome of the most enlightened character, and amiable disposition; who abhor religious persecution as much as I do, and earnestly wish to see it given up by all parties: nor do I doubt but there are true and pious Christians in that communion—men who love the Bible and the religion of the Bible, and with whom I should have no objection to commune, who yet from the dread of schism, or other circumstances, cannot persuade themselves to separate from their mother church. Notwithstanding these concessions, I *do deny* that the present church of Rome is by any means a *true* church of Christ, and that for this plain and potent reason; because it is not founded on *his* laws, but on a manifest *usurpation* of his authority over the faith and consciences of men, as I conceive has been already demonstrated, in the preceding Essays. I state this matter thus strongly, because hints have been thrown out, at various periods, of the practicability of healing the great schism, as it is called, and re-uniting the Protestant and Catholic churches*. That two

* Laud, it is well known, had a great partiality for the rites, if not the doctrines of Popery; but the greatest advances on their subject were made between Dr. Dupin, and Archbishop Wake, though the latter has been perhaps unjustly charged with offering to sacrifice the doctrines of the English church. Compare *the Confessional*, Second Edition, preface, p. lxxvi, &c. and *Mosheim's Ecclesiastical History*, vol. VI. Appendix No. III. Bossuet, and other French writers, have indeed so gilded over the creed of Rome as to tempt some Protestants to swallow it; and Mr. Butler endeavours to persuade us that, with a few concessions on both sides, a re-union is not impracticable—but *cui bono?* what good can result from disguising principles, or betraying truth? (See *Buller's Historical Account of Confessions*, &c. just published, Essay IV.) And even were the churches to unite, it would most probably only be to persecute Dissenters.

National churches, as those of England and Rome, or Constantinople, may unite, I will not dispute; but before the Bishop of Rome can set his foot into the church of Christ, he must lay down his sceptre and his crown: he must renounce his infallibility, and the authority he has assumed over faith and conscience. It is in vain to say, each party should make concessions, and meet half way in accommodation: we have no right to concede a particle of truth, or of the rights of conscience. We may communicate indeed with each other under a thousand shades of opinion: but it is on the principle of uniting in *essential* truth; and that wherein we do not exactly agree, we claim the right to differ. If an Arminian and a Calvinist commune together, it is not because one gives up the freedom of the will, or the other the divine decrees; if a member of the church of England, and one of the church of Scotland commune together, it is not that one gives up Episcopacy or the other Presbyterianism: or if a Pædobaptist and Antipædobaptist meet at the Lord's table, it is not from a dereliction of principle; but because, symbolizing in what they consider as the essentials of Christianity, and submitting to the same authority (that of Christ) they agree to wave the points in which they differ; but neither to relinquish them, nor to give up their importance, in a comparative point of view.

But the first demand of the church of Rome is, "Believe as I believe, and receive your faith from me*:" Here then we separate, and cannot possi-

* Many disputes have arisen as to the creed of Popery, and I

bly unite. We divide upon a question of allegiance; and it is treason even to treat with the usurper. In the church of Christ we have no king but JESUS.

It is perfectly consistent in the church of Rome, to endeavour to keep us in ignorance of the scriptures, which are the charter of our religious rights. The originals are indeed accessible to the learned; but it is a most extraordinary fact, that Catholics are so conscious of the current of scripture being against them, that they dare not trust the people with *their own* translation with-

readily concede that the dogmas of individuals ought not to be confounded with the symbols of the church. I agree with Mr. Butler, to take the Catholic principles from Pope Pious IV. "I admit the sacred scriptures according to the sense which the Holy Mother Church has held and does hold, to whom *it belongs* to judge of the true sense and interpretation of the holy scriptures; nor will I ever take and interpret them otherwise than according to the *unanimous* consent of the fathers"—who, by the bye, are seldom unanimous, but when they are wrong. See the *Bibliotheca Biblica*, and examine the harmony of the fathers on the first ten verses of the Book of Genesis, and you will find enough to seal the lips of a Catholic interpreter for ever!

Let us turn to another of Mr. B's. standard authorities—"Roman Catholic principles," Sect. 1. p. 166. The "way or means" to understand the scriptures is—"not the reading of scripture interpreted according to the *private judgment* of each disjunctive person or nation in particular; but it is an attention and submission to the voice of the Catholic or universal church, established by Christ for the instruction of all; spread for that end through all nations, and *visibly* continued in the succession of pastors and people through all ages. From *this church guided in truth, and secured from error* in matters of *faith*, by the promised assistance of the Holy Ghost, every one may learn the *right sense* of the scriptures," &c. So then, it seems, to understand the scriptures, it is not only necessary, in the first place, to consult the Fathers—about the length of the statutes at large, i. e. about 50 vols. in folio; but we must go to the *living* authority after all, to see that we do not misunderstand the fathers! but thank God, we Protestants have a shorter way to truth!

out *bolstering it up* with *notes and comments*: and thus they make the Bible so dear a book that few can purchase it. And after all—when they have got the scriptures in their own translation, and so explained as to harmonize with their own creed—they must not open the book till they have a licence from their Confessor, “who will instruct” the Catholic “in what spirit he is to read them*.”

* *Butler's Confessions of Faith* (just published) Essay ii. p. 145. In this work Mr. B. considers the subject of free access to the Scriptures at some length, and admits,

1. That in primitive times the laity read the scriptures freely ; 2. That the restraint enjoined upon reading the scriptures was (as Fenelon says) “in consequence of the troubles occasioned by the Waldenses and Albigenses,” who ventured not only to read, but to interpret them ; and 3. that some Protestants have been so unwise (I cannot say ignorant) as to deny their own principles and admit of similar restraints, among whom Mr. B. ranks the Anti-biblists and Dr. Marsh. So far we are agreed. But when he *denies* “that it is contrary to the *general principles* of the Catholic religion to publish the Bible in a *vulgar tongue without notes*, we pause to examine his facts. 1. We grant him that “no Syriac, no Armenian, no Ethiopic, no Arabic Bible has any notes ; yet those are vulgar tongues of large portions of the world,” and we are willing to add, that in Greek and Hebrew, and in mighty Polyglots also, his church have printed the scriptures without notes. But does Mr. B. mean to sneer at us, or to make us smile at him ? Surely this cannot be meant for argument, or designed to prove, that it is not contrary to the *general principle* of their church to allow the scriptures without notes in the vulgar tongue !

Another of his facts is, that “at the revocation of the Edict of Nantz, 60,000 copies of a French translation of the New Testament were distributed among the *converted* Protestants,” by the order of the *kind and benevolent* Louis XIV. True Sir, and you will allow me to add, that this was a *converted* translation too: but suppose the government of the united kingdoms of Britain and Ireland were to revoke all the privileges granted to Roman Catholics during the present reign, to order them to burn their mass book, and to change their faith ; suppose a part of the Catholic population were tempted by the love of life and of their families to turn Protestants ; and suppose farther, that the Prince Regent was to present these apostate

On the Catholic Claims I have already given an opinion. Most freely do I allow to all the rights of conscience, and the utmost liberty of worship : but when they ask for political power, we demand security that those rights shall not be

Catholics with 60,000 *Protestant Testaments*, what would be your opinion of his *kindness*? — Had I been a Catholic, I would not have mentioned this cruel insult to humanity.

But lastly, there have been nine “original versions” of the whole Bible, and twelve of the New Testament, besides Psalters and Gospels published in the *French* language prior to 1809, either in 8vo. or a smaller size; but “which of these editions are or not accompanied by *notes*, (adds Mr. B.) I cannot say; but from their *size* it is most evident that the far greater part have *none* :” this, to say the least of it, is presumption used for argument, for Mr. B. knows nothing of the fact, neither do I; let us therefore turn to his learned friend Dr. Marsh, and he will tell us, “that in the Catholic countries of *France, Italy, &c.* translations of the scriptures are *not common* : nor will they ever become so, while the use of them is discouraged by the Catholic clergy; for the individual examples of encouragement, which have been occasionally quoted, are certainly *exceptions to the general rule.*” *Marsh’s History of the Translations of the Scriptures*, p. 11

But I have been turning Mr. Butler’s pages backward and forward to find his account of *English Translations of the scriptures* circulated by his church without notes, for one of these would tell more to her honour than all those in Arabia, Egypt, or Ethiopia : But I find none mentioned; and by referring to the Report of the Committee of the House of Commons on Education, I find evidence upon oath, and from Dr. Poynter, a Catholic Prelate, “Vicar Apostolic of the Midland district,” that the Catholic laity “are only allowed to read the *approved* Catholic translation of the scriptures, and we (says the Bishop) have *no* approved Catholic translation *without notes.*” p. 521.

To this I beg leave to add one other fact in point, that some short time since when several Protestants, preferring that Catholics should read the scriptures in their own Rhemish version, though erroneous, rather than not read them at all, offered to subscribe to an edition of the Rhemish Testament for their use “without note or comment,” they were informed by the same high authority — “such a proposal would not have been agreeable to our practice.” *Correspondence on the formation of the Roman Catholic Bible Society*, p. 25.

denied to us ; and *that* security cannot be given, but by renouncing spiritual usurpation—that it is, by renouncing Popery.

It is true that in England, where we have so large a majority of Protestants, we might run little risk of danger: it must be a considerable time, at least, before Catholics could gain the ascendancy: but in Ireland the case is materially different. A Catholic representation, Catholic magistrates and judges, and a Catholic privy council, would aim, in the first place, to dissolve the Union; and then, to require a Catholic King at the head of a Catholic government, would be so just and reasonable, and indeed so necessary to the peace of the country, that I see not how it could be reasonably denied. I even consider it as the necessary result of such a measure: the question with me therefore involves the Union, not only of the two kingdoms, but of the two crowns.

But would Catholic emancipation, or rather *power*, be for the peace and happiness of the country? I answer, most decidedly, in the negative; and appeal, not only to reason, but to facts—even to *recent* facts in France. The first effect would probably be a persecution of the Protestants, and the next (if it were not rather the first) a suppression of all Protestant Schools, and of all Protestant authority. Civilization in a few years would be thrown back a century. The Catholic church would assume all its splendour, and all its immunities. Toleration would be as impossible in Ireland as in Spain, and religion as full of superstition.

I know indeed, that many Protestants think otherwise; but do they not misconceive the character of the Irish nation? Bold and enterprising, zealous in their religion and devoted to the priesthood, they would form the most dangerous instruments of Papal tyranny; and never think themselves emancipated till the Protestants were enslaved.

It may not, however, be always unsafe to grant their wishes. Let the whole population be educated, and a spirit of free inquiry excited, as has been the case in Scotland*, and the circumstances will be so altered, that I should fear no danger, in granting all which they require. In short, let them be emancipated from ignorance and priestcraft, and I conceive no emancipation need to be denied them. And it is pleasing to anticipate this event at no great distance, when we review the benevolent exertions now making for its accomplishment—not only by government, but by various Societies at the expence of several thousands annually†; and though the Catholic authorities will not allow the free circulation of

* Scotland was, it appears, since the Revolution, in quite as bad a state as Ireland now is, and even worse. “In all times” says Fletcher of Saltoun, “there have been about 100,000 vagabonds who have lived without any regard either to the laws of the land, or even those of God and nature.” Political Works of Andrew Fletcher, 8vo. p. 144. Yet in one century, such was the consequence of National Education, crime has been so diminished, that many populous towns in England have furnished more criminals at one quarter sessions, than all Scotland in a year.

† Namely, the English Sunday School, the British and Foreign School, the Hibernian, and Dublin Sunday School Societies; the two latter of whom calculate that they have nearly 60,000 children under instruction, beside adults.

the scriptures, there are benevolent priests, as well as clergymen, who at least connive at it. In addition to these, the Evangelical clergy and the Methodists, the Independents and the Baptists, maintain a rivalry in itinerating through the country to preach, to encourage schools, to disseminate the scriptures and religious tracts* ; which, however, it may be viewed by the eye of party, must eventually enlighten the country—much more so than if all their exertions were in one direction, or from one source.

But admitting that instruction is only wanted to prepare Ireland for all the blessings of a complete Toleration, the question very naturally arises, why not *now* grant that emancipation, (as it is called) to Protestant Dissenters in England, which we shall be willing to allow to Catholic dissenters in the sister kingdom, when they become enlightened. The safety of the Protestant religion cannot in this case be called in question, nor (as I think we have seen) even the safety of of the episcopal establishment. And how to account for some clergymen shewing a greater reluctance to the toleration of Protestant Dissenters than to that of Roman Catholics, I know not, without supposing that they conceive themselves nearer related to the latter than to the former, and that episcopacy is of greater import-

* In addition to the above mentioned Societies, which are confined to the encouragement of schools, the "Irish Evangelical Society," beside the assistance of Itinerants from England, has founded an Academy at Dublin, for the education of native preachers. The "Baptist Society for promoting the Gospel in Ireland," in addition to preaching, have particularly turned their attention to the establishment of *Native* Irish Schools, and Readers, &c.

ance than Protestantism. This is the only principle on which a union between the churches of England and Rome (above alluded to) can possibly be founded; in which case, though Catholics now call on Protestant Dissenters for support, there is great probability that they would cordially unite against them. There can be no doubt that Bancroft and Laud, their dioceses being secured to them, would rather have cooperated with the Roman clergy, than with the best and most learned of the Puritans, whom they persecuted.

But what can the Dissenters want? *The whole of their civil rights.* I shall still, however, avoid the political question, and only state, that there is one point conceded to the Catholics, which is yet denied to Protestant Dissenters: to preach where they please, without the trouble and ceremony of licencing their chapels, which is not, that I can find, required of Roman Catholics. A dissenter indeed, equally with a churchman, may have as large a party as he pleases to a dinner or a supper, to a concert or a dance; but supposing a religious congregation to dine together, they can neither engage in prayer, in singing, or in exhortation, if more than twenty beside the resident family be present, without being subject to a penalty—if the footman of a clergyman should be present to give information. Yet even here, a Catholic priest might celebrate the mass, without control or censure!

I have no wish to enter into the question of field-preaching, farther than to observe, there is nothing against it in the Bible, or the writings of

the Reformers; but if any benevolent or pious person, observing a number of thoughtless youth sporting either in the street or in the fields on the Lord's day, attempt to exhort them to "flee from the wrath to come," he is liable to be prosecuted, because the place is not licenced*!

But secondly, We are to consider the subject in reference to *future* events, as delineated in scripture prophecy, and referring particularly to the *final overthrow of Popery*. And here I beg it to be understood, that by Popery I do not simply mean the creed or ritual of the Romish church; but that system of tyranny and usurpation over the rights of conscience which originated at Rome, and spread itself throughout Christendom, and is as yet, in but few countries, *totally* abolished. I conceive that a man may believe in transubstantiation and the seven sacraments, and

* At the general Quarter Sessions at Wisbeach in July last, a Methodist preacher appealed from the conviction of two Magistrates (one a Clergyman) who had fined him in the penalty of £30. for preaching in a *field* unlicensed. The principal evidence against the Methodist was the servant of the Rector, who, as appeared upon cross-examination, could not distinguish between a Prayer and a Sermon, only he knew that he preached contrary to the Liturgy, "because he had not the Prayer Book in his hand." *Evan. Mag.* Oct. 1816, p. 399. Dissenters may wonder at such ignorance, especially in a Clergyman's family; but it seems the case is by no means singular: it was the servant of a Clergyman (I omit names out of respect to the *cloth*) who was evidence against W. Kent of Childrey, who *prayed* without a license! This Clergyman's servant, though he was used to go to church, declared upon oath that he did not know what the *Liturgy* was! The *learned* counsel, however, thought that prayer and preaching were the same thing, and endeavoured to prove (*Risum teneatis amici?*) that it required a license to say the *Lord's Prayer*; and the *noble* chairman of the bench seems to have believed him, till the Court of King's Bench taught him better. See an Abstract of the Trial, *Evan. Mag.* vol. XIX, p. 479, &c.

{ may practise many of the superstitions of the Catholic church, and yet be a good Christian, and a good citizen; but it is Popery as a practical system which I denounce and deprecate. It is assuming Christ's authority over the faith and conscience which makes it spiritual treason: it is trading with the souls of men—making gain of godliness by the sale of pardons, indulgencies, and dispensations, which adds felony to treason; lastly, it is the system of persecution, destroying the bodies, as well as the souls of men, which adds murder to felony and treason; and thus fills up that measure of iniquity which must finally sink the Harlot of Babylon into perdition; a fate which will be accelerated by her own presumption and temerity.

* “ I sit as a Queen and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow ! ” is her self-gratulation immediately before her final ruin, which is depicted by the prophetic Spirit to be as sudden as it is fatal, like a millstone hurled by the arm of an angel into the great abyss. But this circumstance (among others) has led Dr. Gill, and other expositors to expect some new triumph of Popery, which shall, for a short time, raise her to a giddy height of elevation, and so make her fall the more signal and tremendous. It may be thought that present circumstances do not favour this idea*. It is true,

* Hitherto the fate of Popery has been fluctuating, and while it has been depressed in one country, it has risen in another. Even now, much as this country is enlightened, the influence of Popery strengthens; not so much (as I hope) by the accession of *real* Protestants, as by many, who in the late triumphs of Atheism joined that standard, now falling back into the ranks of the Roman Catholic religion. In Ireland indeed, the Catholics boast of numbers equal, if

* This by the way is not Peculiar to any Church in Practice, - only, the church of Rome holds it in theory;

that the gospel has now a remarkable spread in Asia, Africa, and America: but all the inhabitants of those countries might be converted without affecting the seat of Popery.

Indeed if we look to the continent, where the throne of the beast rests, we shall find the revival of Popery not less remarkable than the spread of Christianity elsewhere. It was presumed by many that Infidelity had given such a fatal stab to Popery, that it could not long survive, and perhaps it may not *long*; but the wounded monster (like other wounded beasts of prey) may become the more desperate as he draws nearer to his end. We see the moment "that which opposed was taken out of the way," the kings of the earth, that is, the continental princes, agreed to give their power—"one hour" to the beast. Popery was restored in all its splendour, and persecution renewed with all its bitterness in a *few days*. The Protestant religion was instantly suppressed in Spain and Italy, where it had begun to bud, and the weak protection afforded to Protestants, (if it can be called such) is not sufficient to shield them from bitter persecution. The subjects transferred from Catholic to Protestant powers, are with difficulty restrained in their allegiance; and obedience to the latter, in any manner interfering with their spiritual obedience to the Pope, declared impossible.

The late Mr. *Fuller* has remarked, with a

not superior to the whole population, but this account is evidently exaggerated to support the claim of emancipation, as if the whole country were in their interest.

shrewdness and penetration for which he was remarkable, that the angel which announced the fall of Babylon was immediately preceded by one who announced the universal extension of the gospel, "And I saw (says the Prophet) another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people." It would be difficult to express more accurately that missionary spirit which is now running through the earth, penetrating the interior of Africa and Australasia, as well as into the more civilized empires of India and China; and the warning voice, "Give glory to God," calls loudly on the Pagan world, to "worship him who made heaven and earth and sea."

"This (says Mr. Fuller) is the language of solemn warning. It is addressed to all whom it concerns, good and bad, especially to those who live in the time here referred to; the time immediately preceding the fall of the antichristian power, and so looks with a severe aspect on those who persevere in their attachment to it, notwithstanding the light which will [then] have been diffused in the world. They who at *any period* surrender their consciences to human authority, and fully imbibe the antichristian system, will incur the wrath of God: but they who do this in the face of that light which by this time will be spread through the world, will incur greater degrees of the divine displeasure than those who have been carried away with it in darker ages. The 12th and 13th verses ("Here is the patience of the

saints," &c.) would seem to portend a time of persecution *prior* to the final overthrow of the Antichristian power; a time which may be [considered] as the last struggles of the beast. This is the flood cast out of the mouth of the dragon after the woman (ch. xii. 15.) the gathering together of the kings of the whole world to the *battle* of the great day of God Almighty, (chap. xvi. 14.) and the *war* made by the beast and the kings, against him who sat upon the horse, and against his army. chap. xix. 19*."

I would wish to speak with great modesty and caution on the subject of scripture prophecy, and especially in application to present times; but it does not seem difficult to trace an analogy between these events; that is, between the spread of religion abroad, and its persecution nearer home. It was the pregnancy of the church which enraged the dragon; and the spread of the gospel, where it is beyond their control, may well excite the envy, and the malice, of the worshippers of the beast.

These predictions however afford one consolation, that the last struggle of the beast will be as short as it will be severe; and another is, that they only who have participated in her crimes shall be made partakers of her plagues.

The image before us, of Babylon's destruction, is that of an earthquake and a volcano, ingulphing a mighty city, and vomiting out fire and smoke—but discovering in its centre, as we shall see, what no literal volcano ever did. Let us ap-

* Fuller on the Apocalypse, p. 257, 8.

proach the awful scene*, and observe the strong sensations of wonder and astonishment, grief and agony, with which the surrounding spectators are evidently agitated.

The chief mourners in this scene are *kings*—“the kings of the earth, who have committed [spiritual] fornication,” that is, idolatry, “and lived deliciously with her,” partaking of the fruits of her iniquity,—these, when they see the smoke of her burning, stand afar off, as the great are prone to do from misery—“for the fear of her torment, saying, Alas! alas! that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come!”—But where is Babylon? that great city—the city on seven hills—eternal

* Bishop Newton and other commentators seem to understand this prophecy as implying a total burning of the city by some triumphant conqueror; others observing the quantity of bitumen, &c. in the soil of Italy have suggested the idea of a literal volcano. I pretend not to determine what is left ambiguous: I only insist upon the *imagery* as being that of a volcano accompanied by an earthquake; and this I think will hardly admit of doubt.

Yet the literal accomplishment of this destruction by fire, may be thought hardly consistent with the assertion of fallen Babylon becoming a cage of unclean birds, chap. xviii. 2. Unclean and ravenous birds, however, are wont to harbour in the ruins of desolated cities: but perhaps the image may be carried farther as a representation of hell itself: “the habitation of devils (*δαιμονια* demons) and the hold (*φυλακη* prison) of every foul spirit†, and a cage (*φυλακη* prison) of every unclean and hateful bird,”—alluding to the birds of prey, i. e. infernal spirits hovering about the entrance (the crater) of the infernal pit.

With respect to the description of Rome as ‘the eternal city, seated upon seven hills,’ it is not only familiar to the classics, but used by Catholic writers in application to modern Rome. It is found, says Bishop Newton, in the very title of Kircher’s *Obeliscus Pamphilius*: “In *urbis æternæ* ornamentum erexit Inn. X. Pont. Max.—He cites from Daubuz, p. 812.

† Spirits in prison, 1 Pet. iii. 19.

Rome! “It is fallen! is fallen!” sunk into the crater of perdition. Where are now her lofty spires, and her majestic domes? Where her splendid palaces, and her boasted monuments of ancient art? her treasures of literature and of science? “Alas! alas! that great city! that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come!”

“And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth her merchandise any more! The merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet*, and all thyine wood, and all manner of vessels of ivory, and all manner of vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron and marble; and cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves and souls of men†.”

* The frequent mention “of purple and of scarlet” among the merchandise of Rome, and indeed as forming her own dress, leads me to observe that they were from time immemorial the colours of royalty and rank, and I have no doubt from the first symbolical, and both derived from blood, an image with which all military nations are delighted; See Isaiah lxiii. 1—3. And if, as a respectable writer suggests, scarlet was worn by the public authorities in time of war, and purple in time of peace, the former might refer to the state of the blood as fresh and flowing, and the latter to blood congealed and stagnant, as having ceased to flow. So the true purple of the ancients is by Pliny stated to be the colour of stagnant blood, “concreti sanguinis;” and the epithet “purple” is applied to blood even by Homer, δ'αιματι πορφυρεω (purple blood) in his battle of the frogs. I would add that the primitive scarlet was made from the Coccini, or al-kermes, and the purple from the πορφυρα or porpura. But on this curious subject, see *Calmet's Dictionary*, (Taylor's Edition) in *Purple*, and the *Fragments* to ditto, No. ccxxxv.

† Rev. xviii. 10—13.

Those who take the term *merchants* allegorically, apply it to such as make a trade of religion, which has been remarkably the case with many of the *religious* of the church of Rome; but as I have taken *kings* literally, I consider myself partly under obligation to do the same by the next order of society. The merchants of Tyre, who seem here alluded to, were princes, and companions to princes, among the ancients*, however scornfully they may be looked down upon by modern nobility; and the articles in which they traded seem divisible into three classes, those connected, 1. with the liberal arts, 2. with the Luxuries of life, 3. with that more criminal traffic -- the bodies and souls of men.

1. It cannot be denied that the kingdom of Christ, not being of this world, Christianity, pure and simple as it was at first promulgated, promised no employ to the arts and sciences. The God "who dwelleth not in temples made with hands," requireth not the aid of architects or statuaries, painters or musicians, like "the elegant mythology of Greece and Rome." Had it not been for Popery, it must be acknowledged, we should have had no "majestic cathedrals with vast gothic arches" -- no painted windows to transmit "the mellowed light of heaven." He who stretched "the vaulted sky," and drew thereon the splendours of the rising and the setting sun, is not likely to be gratified with the efforts of Grecian or Italian artists: -- nor the ear accustomed to angelic voices, and the harps of heaven, to be tempted to listen to "the

* Isa. xxiii. 8. Ezek. xxvii, and xxviii.

full toned organ or the quavering choir." And as to the simple souls whom the Almighty "seeks to worship him," when properly engaged in devotion to him, they have neither eyes nor ears for mortal objects. It is not so, however, with the world; their piety is created, and their devotion fed, by harmony and splendour; and this will account for the preference given to Popery as a national religion. It is adapted for men of learning, genius, taste*—for persons of distinction, and "men high in office." It is not therefore to be wondered at, that the fall of such a church, and such a system, excites painful regrets, and bitter lamentations†.

2. Popery is friendly to all the elegant luxuries, and to the pride of life. It denies no fashionable amusement—but it provides for every personal gratification, whether of the eye, the ear or the taste; except only to the religious orders, and they find means to evade their deprivations. The rank of life into which it admits the ministers of

* It is not meant to insinuate that the religion of Christ is any otherwise inimical to the arts and sciences, than as not employing them in *religion*. They are no farther to be objected to, than as they contribute to the support of idolatry and parade. We may love religion in a barn or a cavern; but we certainly wish to afford it every accomodation of convenience, and even comfort.

† That the kings of the earth should thus bewail the fate of the Harlot, has been thought inconsistent with their uniting together to destroy her: (chap. xvii. 16.) but this admits of an easy solution. The same kings who agree to give their power to the beast, may also, upon that power being used against themselves, unite in the opposite interest; and yet after all lament that *that* church which formed so useful and convenient an instrument of ambition—which flattered their pride and gratified their lusts, should be thus totally destroyed: after all perhaps it may be as it has always been—"the potsherds of the earth strive together, and are dashed to pieces against each other.

the church, particularly the Pope and Cardinals, as secular princes, is certainly unfriendly to practical religion: and their scarlet and purple robes mark them as belonging to *her*, whose uniform they wear. Much of the merchandise of Rome is described as consisting in articles of show and splendour, as gold, silver, and precious stones, in which the church of Rome certainly exceeds all others.

3. These merchants carry on a criminal trade in the bodies and souls of men*. Slavery in all its forms is a bitter portion, but that which is spiritual or ecclesiastical is most bitter—it is the slavery of the mind; and this we have seen is the peculiar character of Popery. It denies the right of private judgment, and allows no man to think for himself in matters of religion; or if he *will* presume to think, it allows him not to express his thoughts under penalty of the inquisition and the stake! To read the scriptures is allowed only by the special permission of the priests, and by them to such only, as it is thought will make no improper use of it—that is, who will not dare to think differently from the priesthood. But here opens a new scene of merchandise of incalculable profit—licences, indulgencies, and pardons for the living, and masses for the dead; these were the articles which first scandalized the great German

* In Ezek. xxvii. 13. where it is said that Javan, Tubal, and Meshech traded in the souls of men, (*εν ψυχαῖς ἀνθρώπων*, *Sept.*) it is naturally taken for a trade in *slaves*, (*vulg.* *mancipia*) but here where bodies and souls are both enumerated, Bossuet thinks it alludes to both slaves and free persons; Lowman, that it implies a slavery of both soul and body; see the latter in Rev. xviii. 13.

Reformer, and indeed all Europe, and produced the Reformation.

But these spiritual merchants, who were made rich by her*, are cut off from all their gains, and therefore may well mourn and lament for her—“weeping, and wailing, and saying—Alas! alas! that great city, that was cloathed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones and pearls! for in one hour so great riches are come to nought. And every ship-master, and all the company in ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by sea, stood afar off, and cried when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, “What city is like unto that great city?—Alas! alas! for in one hour is she made desolate.”

One circumstance is here particularly observable, that these deep lamentations are none of them represented as disinterested. Kings regret their loss of power and splendour, and merchants, and mariners, the ruin of commerce: and this seems to afford a rational ground of hope, that those powers who have withdrawn from the usurped authority of Rome, though but partially, will, in proportion, be less affected by this calamity. Yet, as an earthquake which should swallow up such a city as Rome, must shake the earth to its centre, and agitate the continent to a great extent; so it is

* I doubt not but many, who are not reckoned among Rome's citizens will, join in the lamentation of her fate. In the partial destruction of her splendour under the French usurpation, many nominal Protestants joined in the lamentations, and trembled at her approaching fate. It is not for me to say whether this arose from humanity, or sympathy, or apprehension of being “made partakers of her plagues.”

natural to expect that many kingdoms and states must be affected by this catastrophe.

But while earth is lamenting, what are the sentiments and feelings of the world above? In a former chapter we heard a murmur of voices from the souls under the altar, saying, "O Lord! how long?" Then they were commanded to wait for a season, till their fellow martyrs also should be slain*. But the event is now accomplished, the number of martyrs is completed, and the great Harlot, who was intoxicated with their blood, is now destroyed. "Rejoice over her, thou heaven! and ye holy apostles and prophets, for God hath avenged you on her!"

But while kings—and merchants—and mariners stand *afar off* and wail, let us approach the borders of the volcano—and what see we there?—alas! no gilded spires—no bridal-lamp—no vestage of her splendour or her joy:—the same convulsion which buries all her wealth and grandeur discloses all her guilt; her crater is filled with blood—for "in her is found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth†!"

But how Popery can be made answerable for the blood of prophets and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth, demands investigation.

First. I have stated Popery to be that system of spiritual tyranny in which persecution always originates; that *soul-slavery* to which we have just adverted, which forbids the liberty of thought and

* Rev. vi. 9—14.

† Rev. xviii. 24.

of speech on subjects of religion — which forbids man even the worship of his Maker, but in her own prescribed forms ! This is the scarlet Harlot whether she be seated at Jerusalem, or at Babylon — at Constantinople, or at Rome. It is the calling our fellow-man upon earth “master” or “father,” in the sense forbidden by our Lord, and receiving our rule of faith and duty from human, instead of divine authority*.

But secondly, in a *comparative* view Rome is the great seat of persecution, whether Pagan or Christian; and the blood shed by her authority infinitely surpasses all that was shed by every other persecuting power †. “In her was found” — that is, in the crater of her volcano, wherein generally are found springs of burning lava, and waters evaporated to steam by the more than boiling heat of the internal fire — “In her was found only *blood*,” the blood of prophets and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth ‡.

* Nor have the ablest, the wisest, and the most applauded advocates of Popery, denied the right of coercion in religion. *Bossuet*, for instance the celebrated Bishop of Meaux, so much admired and commended by Mr. Butler, says, “The exercise of the power of the sword in matters of religion and conscience cannot be called in question, *the right is certain* — and there is no delusion more dangerous than to make Toleration an essential character of the true church.” “L’exercise de la puissance du glaive dans les matieres de la religion, et de la conscience; chose, que ne peut être revoquée en doubt — *le droit est certain* — il n’y a point d’illusion plus dangereuse que de donner *la souffrance* pour un caractere de vraye Eglise.” *Hist des Var.* l. x. p. 51. Par. 1740. 12mo.

† Matt. xxiii. 8—10.

‡ In the next chapter however the scene changes, and the blood that is avenged is seen no more; but in more harmony with the awful imagery employed, we read of “a lake of fire and brimstone;”

There is found the blood of all that were slain during the first ten persecutions of the Christians — from the days of Nero to those of Constantine.

There is found all the blood shed during the alternate persecutions between the Arians and the Orthodox, under pretence of zeal for the prerogative of the Father, or the glory of the Son.

There is found the blood of a million of Waldenses pursued to prison, to torture, and to death, during the middle ages, for presuming to believe differently from the church of Rome.

There is found the blood that was shed in this country from the days of Wickliffe, down to the glorious Revolution of 1688.

There is found the blood that was shed by the Duke D'Alva in the Netherlands, in attempting to establish the Inquisition, and suppress the Reformation.

There is found the blood that was shed by the Bourbons in France, from the massacre of Paris, down to the period of the French Revolution — or rather to the present period — for France is still the land of persecution.

There is found the blood shed in Ireland, from the massacre of 1640, to the Rebellion of 1798*.

or burning lava, into which the beast and the false prophet must eventually be cast. Ch. xix. 20. The explanation may be difficult, but the remark is obvious, that all the terrible images which poetry can furnish are lavished on this subject.

* It may probably be objected, that it was rather a thirst for plunder, than for blood, that dictated the cruelties practised in these latter instances, and this is freely granted: Religion is often the pretext only of persecutors; but let us strip them of this pretext. It is allowed that they were generally men of no religion, hypocrites, atheists, *devils*: but so much the more important is it to shew that it

There is found the blood of all the millions which have been destroyed by the Inquisition of Spain and Portugal, in India, in Spanish America or the West Indies. All were persecuted, tortured, murdered, massacred—upon the same principle of their persecutors having a right to dictate to the consciences of men in matters of

is not from the gospel, but only from that corruption of it yeliped *Popercy*, that they derive their authority. Admit only that every man has a right to judge for himself in religious matters, and you destroy every pretense for what are called religious wars, or military conversions. The devil has as good a claim to the government of the world, (perhaps a better, for it has been willingly surrendered) as any earthly power can have to the control of conscience.

Nor let it be suggested that I have collected these enormities in order to excite animosity against Catholics, and expose them to Protestant persecution. So far from it, that I consider persecution in the latter far more criminal than in the former, inasmuch as they act in direct opposition to their own principles, whereas the former are supported by them. Persecution in Catholics is highly criminal—in Protestants more so,—but in Dissenters worst of all.

Still less be it supposed, that by reciting or adopting the song of heaven, I take pleasure in the misery of those who suffer the divine judgments. It is perfectly consistent with humanity to rejoice in the triumph of the laws over mighty criminals: and it is presumed there is nothing in the divine government inconsistent with infinite goodness in the punishment of the impenitent; in so far as it may prevent the progress of crime, it may be mercy to others while it is justice to them. And though we are not always able to vindicate the divine judgments, beings of a superior order, and in a higher state, have no hesitation on the subject. In the instance now before us they sing: "Allelujah!—for true and righteous are his judgments; for he hath judged the great Harlot which did corrupt the earth by her fornication, and avenged the blood of his servants at her hand. And again they said, Allelujah!"

It is observable therefore that though justice warrants their revenge, (Rev. xviii. 6.) yet they are not their own avengers. He, whose name is the Logos, or Word of God wears indeed a vesture dipt in blood—in the blood of his enemies, (chap. xix. 13, 15, comp. Isaiah lxiii. 2, 3.) yet those who follow him are clothed in fine linen, white and clean," i. e. unspotted by the blood which flowed around them.

faith, or to enjoin their own religion upon others. Well might the inspired apostle say — “ Here was found the blood of *all* that [on account of religion] were slain upon the earth !”

But hark ! I hear a shout from heaven ! — “ *Allelujah !* Salvation, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God ! For true and righteous are his judgments : for he hath judged the great Harlot, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand. And again they say, *Allelujah*. And her smoke rise up for ever and ever. And the four and twenty elders, and the four living creatures, fall down and worship him that sitteth on the throne, saying, Amen, *Allelujah !*” Again I hear, as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying *Allelujah* !*”

* Rev. xix. 1—6.

APPENDIX.

No. I.

APPENDIX to ESSAY I.

On the Principles on which the Christian church is founded.

AFTER the preceding sheets were worked off, I am happy in being able to strengthen the argument of this Essay by an Extract from a Work of Dr. J. M. MASON, of New York, just received from that city, and about to be reprinted in London, which will I hope receive a circulation correspondent to the celebrity of the author, and the importance of the subject. It is entitled, "A Plea for Sacramental Communion on Catholic principles."

My Extract is from the first part on, "the Scriptural Doctrine" of Church Communion, on which the Author thus reasons :

"Strange as it may appear, it is nevertheless true, that men who have the Bible in their hands as their *only* rule of faith and practice, appeal immediately to its testimony, for their *justification*, but very rarely for their *information*. They take for granted that their peculiarities are right, and that the only use of the scripture is to *prove* them. Much is gained when, instead of putting their language into the mouth of the book of God, the book of God is allowed to sit in judgment upon themselves, and to pronounce its own verdict. This is that course of truth which, however feebly, we shall endeavour to follow. So that our leading inquiry contemplates the direct doctrine of the scripture concerning Christian fellowship. We must go to first principles :

"There is no point more fully settled in the scriptures, this, that *The Church of God is ONE*.

"It were endless to collect all the proofs. Let one suffice. Paul, or rather the Holy Ghost, who spake by his mouth and wrote with his pen, has thus represented it. *As the*

body is ONE, and hath many members; and all the members of that one body, being MANY, are ONE BODY; so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we ALL baptized into ONE body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been ALL made to drink into ONE Spirit. For the BODY is not ONE member, but MANY*. This analogy between man's natural body and the spiritual body of Christ, which he elsewhere declares to be the church†, Paul presses at great length, and with unusual minuteness. He does it, as any one who shall seriously peruse the context may see, with the design of reproving, and, if possible, destroying that vain glorious temper which had infected the Corinthian converts; each one arrogating to himself, or to that class with which his gifts more immediately connected him, a peculiar pre-eminence and sanctity; as if he and his associates were the special favourites of God, and enjoyed so exclusively the nobler ministrations of the Spirit, as to justify their contempt of others whom they thought to be less distinguished. In order to demonstrate the unreasonableness and unrighteousness of such conduct, he lays down certain indisputable principles concerning the natural body: ex. gr.

“ 1. That the multitude of its members does not destroy its unity, nor their relation to it as a whole—*all the members of that one body, being MANY, are ONE body.* v. 12.

“ 2. That their union with the body is the foundation of all the value, beauty, and excellence, of the members in their respective places. v. 15—24.

“ 3. That the efficiency of the members consists in their mutual co-operation as parts of a common whole—*that there should be no SCHISM in the body.* v. 25.

“ 4. That from their union with the body, there results, by a divine constitution, a communion of interests; a sympathy of feeling, and a reciprocation of benefits—*that the members should have the same care one for another: And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or*

* 1 Cor. xiii. 12—14.

† Eph. i. 22, 23. iii. 16. iv. 3—13.

one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it. v. 25, 26.

“ The use of this similitude Paul declares to be an illustration of the unity of the church, and of the intimate communion of believers. *Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.* v. 27.

“ It is true that the Apostle turns his argument directly against the contentions in the Corinthian church about the superiority, or inferiority, of public offices and spiritual gifts. *And God hath set some in the church; first, apostles, secondarily, prophets, &c.* v. 28—30. But it is also true that the principles of his argument are general; are equally applicable to every thing which tends to cherish among Christians a party feeling, at the expense of weakening the sense of their union, or of interrupting their communion, as members of the body of Christ; and were intended to be so applied. . . .

“ Since, therefore, the Apostle has resembled the unity of the Christian church and the union of Christians, to the unity of the human body and the union of its members; and since the use of this similitude in his exhortation with the Corinthian schismatics was only a special application of a doctrine general in itself, and applicable every where and always to feuds and divisions among those who embrace substantially the same faith, let us in few words, gather up its results, and see how they bear upon the subject of sacramental communion.

“ 1. The body of Christ is one.

“ 2. Every member of this body has, by a divine constitution, utterly independent on his own will, both union and communion with every other member, as infallibly as hands and feet, eyes, ears, and nose, are, by the very constitution of the physical body, united together as parts of a whole, and sympathise with each other accordingly.

“ 3. The members of this body of Christ have a common and unalienable interest in all the provision which God has made for its nutriment, growth, and consolation; and that simply and absolutely, because they are members of that body. Therefore,

“ 4. The members of the church of Christ, individually and collectively, are under a moral necessity, i. e. under the obligation of God’s authority, to recognise each other’s character and privileges; and, consequently, not to deny the tokens of such recognition. Sacramental communion is one of those tokens: therefore, the members of the church of Christ, *as such*, are under the obligation of God’s authority to recognise their relation to Christ and to each other, by joining together in sacramental communion. Nor has any church upon earth the power to refuse a seat at the table of the Lord to one whose “ conversation is as becometh the gospel.” If she has, she has derived it from some other quarter than her master’s grant: and founds the privilege of communion with *her* in something else than a person’s “ having received Christ Jesus the Lord, and walking in him.” Let her look to herself, and see what account she shall be able to render of her usurpation.” p. 9—16.

By comparing the above with our first Essay, p. 12. the reader will see that this argument has been anticipated; at the same time it is here stated with that clearness and strength of expression, that I am happy to avail myself of this important extract; and though names weigh nothing when placed *against* the authority of scripture; yet on the *same* side I persuade myself there is no polemical writer, but would be proud to avail himself of such an ally as Dr. Mason.

In the sequel of the volume, Dr. Mason proceeds to shew with much learning and force of argument, that “ Sacramental Communion on Catholic principles,” [i. e. among true Christians of every denomination,] “ is agreeable to the faith and practice of the church of Christ, from the day of Pentecost to the present time, *with a few local and party exceptions.*” Pref. p. iv.

No. II.

APPENDIX to ESSAY III.

On the Duty of Enquiry, and the right of private Judgment.

. When the third Essay was delivered as a Lecture to the Philological Society, the following observations on the management of Religious Controversy were subjoined by particular request, and are therefore here inserted.

WE no sooner begin to pursue our inquiries after religious truth, than we are assailed on the one hand, and on the other, by the friends and advocates of different systems, each assuring us, that they have already found the object of our research; and wishing to save us the trouble of farther investigation: but nothing is more unwise than to listen to such counsel. If we take the word of others without pushing the inquiry ourselves, we relinquish our right, and desert our duty; besides which, sportsmen well know, that the pleasures of the chase are often greater than the acquisition of their game. Let us, therefore, pursue our object with a steady and courageous course. The observations which I shall offer to the reader will be either, I. *Criteria*, which may serve as way-marks to direct his course; or, II. *Hints* as to the proper temper and disposition, in which the pursuit of truth should be conducted.

I. I beg leave to offer some *Criteria* to direct the reader in the pursuit of truth: and in examining any system of religion presented to my faith, and comparing it with any other, each pretending to the suffrage of reason and of scripture—I would consider it, In reference 1. to the foundations of natural religion—2. to its moral character—3. its tendency to human happiness—4. In reference to the express testimonies of scripture—and 5. In relation to the great object and distinguishing features of Christianity, and especially the doctrine of the Cross.

1. Let the proposed system be considered in relation to the foundation of *Natural Religion*. "If the foundations be destroyed (saith the Psalmist) what shall the righteous do?" In all enquiries, some first principles must be assumed; the most simple and the most certain seem to be, That we exist, and that we are creatures:—that there is a providence and a future state. It is true, that all these points have been disputed; and what points have not? but Atheism is such a gulf that a wise and a good man cannot approach its borders without shuddering. The common sense of mankind revolts at its absurdities; and as to moral virtue, it can have no basis, no guide, no motive there. "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die," is a practical summary of the Atheistic creed.

That there are difficulties attending the belief of a supreme being, a future state, &c. is no more than must be acknowledged as to our own existence; and yet nothing in mathematics can be so clear and certain. All systems of faith supposing the being of a God, this may seem an unnecessary test, but as I connect with it his moral government, and human accountability; for every system which excludes the doctrine of future rewards and punishments, however it may be disguised, I consider as plainly atheistical.

2. I would examine the proposed system in reference to its *moral character*; for I consider moral virtue as so certainly approved of God, and necessary to Society, that I am extremely jealous of every scheme which tends to weaken moral obligation, or supercede the necessity of personal holiness, which is but the Christian name for virtue. But that system which would represent God as indifferent to moral good and evil, or make Jesus Christ "the minister of sin," I regard as worse (if possible) than Atheism itself. God is holy; and "without holiness no man shall see the Lord."

3. I would compare any system that should be offered to my credence with its tendency to promote *human happiness*. As this respects personal happiness, the present criterion of truth is closely connected with the preceding; for holiness and happiness are so inseparable, that we cannot be happy

without holiness, nor holy without a proportional degree of happiness. But carry this test to the happiness of society, and we may also confidently assert, that truth has a direct tendency to the public weal. That system which narrows our benevolence, and cramps our exertions in doing good, carries a black mark on its forehead; for "Pure religion and undefiled is this, *to visit the fatherless and the widow*, and to keep the (moral) garment unspotted from the flesh."

4. I would consider the system proposed in reference to the express testimony of divine revelation. But there are several means of evading or perverting the evidence of scripture, against which we should be always upon our guard.

(1.) As to alterations of the text, or the current translation, I would remark that, where it can be proved the printed copies differ from the most antient and authentic manuscripts, or when it can be made evident that our translators have mistaken the meaning of an original word or phrase, we ought not to shut our eyes against the light, and refuse all correction; for neither copyists nor translators have ever been infallible. The Apostles (and particularly St. Paul,) have in several instances corrected the Greek translation of the Old Testament, to make it more conformable to the Hebrew, and perhaps in one or two instances the text itself. But the *small* number of such errors affecting the *doctrines* of Christianity, can only be accounted for, from the wakeful jealousy of the different sects and parties, who have always narrowly watched each other: and it may be considered as a striking instance of the wisdom of Providence in producing good from evil, that the disputes and divisions in the church have been like a "wall of fire," to guard the integrity of the scriptures. As to *conjectural* emendations, these must be very clear and obvious indeed, to be admitted at all; and can never be listened to for a moment, if they relate to any point of faith. So jealous are Biblical writers of the purity of the sacred text! And with respect to translation, the balance of learning is so well preserved among different parties, that every unfair attempt to twist the scriptures to the use of a particular sect is immediately detected and exposed: a benefit arising out of the diffusion of critical science, of which the

ignorant seem hardly to be aware. For had all our ministers treated human learning with the same neglect and contempt that some have done, the friends of evangelical truth would never have been able to answer "their enemies in the gate."

(2.) Scripture may be easily perverted and debased by detaching the members of a sentence from each other, and thereby dislocating the sense. "There is no God," might thus be brought in proof of atheism, and the New Testament set against the Old, by quoting—"Hang all the Law and the Prophets." This is indeed awful trifling with the word of God; but it shocks our feelings immediately, and is therefore attended with little danger. But when the absurdity is less obvious it is more dangerous, as where scriptural promises are quoted and relied on, without regard to their connection, or authority for their appropriation: such for instance as "I am thy God," or "I will be with thee," which, by a strong impression on the mind may lead to encouragement, or security, in a course of sin. And it is thus, I fear, that some professors of religion apply to themselves either promises to which they are not entitled; or make a use of them for which they were never intended. Thus Satan tempted our Lord to cast himself from the pinnacle of the temple, on the strength of a promise intended to encourage confidence, but not presumption.

But (3.) the last, and by far the most dangerous method of perverting scripture, is in promiscuous and unauthorised allegories, whereby the word of God may be brought to prove any thing and every thing which the preacher's fancy may suggest. I speak the more strongly against this method of perverting scripture, because it is a popular delusion. In ministers it requires talents only of the lowest order, and in hearers capacities of the smallest comprehension. Like a pun or a *double entendre* in conversation, it attracts the admiration of little minds, and persons of a vitiated taste. It is also generally used in the defence of notions the most dishonourable to God, and the most pernicious to mankind; and which scarcely admit of any serious argument in their defence.

The rise of this method of interpretation is generally

attributed to St. Origen, who allegorized all the Bible, except those passages which common sense would have led him to explain figuratively. The little Saints of the church of Rome were highly delighted with this plan of interpretation, and applied plain passages of scripture allegorically, either to the Virgin Mary, or her Son, as fancy led them. Cocceius introduced this system of interpretation among Protestants, and Mr. John Hutchinson recommended it by a vast mass of undigested learning: but neither Origin, nor Cocceius, nor Hutchinson, could have borne with the attempts in this way, of some modern weak enthusiasts.

5. Compare the system proposed with the great and leading features of the gospel. Doth it give glory to God, by securing to him all the honour of our salvation? Doth it promote peace on earth by the benefits it offers to society? Doth it reveal *good will to men* in the way of gratuitous pardon? Doth it bless man by ameliorating his heart, by subliming his affections, by preparing him for a state of exalted and permanent felicity?

Lastly, Doth the scheme adduced bear on it the strong and peculiar character of the doctrine of the cross? This is the grand characteristic of Christianity; for without the blood of the Saviour there is no remission for our sins. It would be impertinent here to enter into the minutiae of the gospel; but "Christ and him crucified" is the sum and substance of the whole.

II. Suffer me now to offer a few *Hints* on the temper and disposition in which the pursuit of religious truth should be conducted.

1. Be not afraid of growing too wise—the strongest characteristic of a fool. To say we know enough is to prove that we know nothing. There are, indeed, first principles of religion so clear and so important, that we may be justified in adhering to them very pertinaciously; but rest not in present acquirements, either of wisdom or of virtue. St. Paul never accounted himself to have attained perfection, either of purity or knowledge—but was pressing towards both. Even Jesus Christ, after he had excited the admiration of the Jewish doctors, still grew in wisdom and in

knowledge. Angels stoop down to listen in our churches, that they may learn some of the mysteries of God. And well am I assured that those who know most of the gospel and of divine truth may still learn more. The Christian's life is as full of activity as that of a bee. He is not to stand folding his hands in the market place, and say "No man has hired me." He may go into the vineyard at the eleventh hour and dig—and have his reward.

But I fear there are some scholars in Christ's school too indolent to learn. They are very fond of quoting Solomon's maxim, "He that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow;" and they wish to avoid trouble. They *settle upon their lees*, as the phrase is in the Prophets, and don't like to be disturbed. They know enough to save their souls, and that is quite enough for them. They are fixed in their opinions, and are determined not to change them! Unhappily this is the case with persons of opinions directly opposite; and yet both are equally confident that they are right.

2. Let not your passions or affections, carry you beyond the dictates of your understanding. It is easy to believe that true which we wish to find so. Doctrines which are palatable, find a ready acceptance with mankind in general. The Lord complained of old, "The prophets prophecy smooth things, and my people love to have it so." Some people are as anxious for comfort as children are for sweetmeats and sugar-candy. They *persuade* themselves that they are believers, and call this Assurance; but the assurance spoken of in the scriptures is founded upon evidence: "We know that we are passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." Hypocrites have often the greatest confidence in themselves; and a comfortable preacher, who "cries *peace, peace*, when there is no peace"—is sure to be popular, while the man who presses self-examination and caution, is esteemed harsh and legal.

3. Be not hasty in charging consequences on an adversary which he expressly disavows. We do not always see the legitimate deductions from our own opinions; and it is equally clear, that we may be mistaken in drawing inferences from those of others. We may labour to convince an ad-

versary of the error or absurdity of his opinions; and we may charge upon those opinions what appears to us their natural and legitimate consequences; but we should not charge an antagonist with maintaining those consequences, which he denies or disavows. Formerly, when persons departed from the orthodox faith, it was thought necessary to charge them with as many errors as were supposed compatible—often with many that were inconsistent—and sometimes with such as were directly opposite. It was thus the Waldenses and the Lollards, were charged with all the heresies in the lists of Irenæus and Augustine, of the far greater part of which they had neither heard, nor thought.

4. Avoid intemperate language* and personal reflections. This caution though given already in the Essay, ought not here to be omitted; and it is a subject upon which “line upon line” is wanted. However provoking may be the language of an adversary, it is no apology for a Christian being scurrilous. We are not to “render railing for railing,” but “contrariwise blessing.” Nor will this necessarily incur a tameness which renders discussion uninteresting. Neither strength nor smartness of stile, nor even good-tempered ridicule, when it is not personal, are inconsistent with the manners of a gentleman or a Christian; but where a doubt arises of their compatability, it is far better to forego a witticism, than to lose our temper. Above all we should be cautious of imputing improper motives to an antagonist, or charging him with wilfulness and insincerity; our natural weakness, our educational prejudices, or our different views of a subject, are quite sufficient to account for all our differences of opinion.

5. In estimating the character of men, judge rather by their fruits than by their blossoms. Many “make a fair

* The following is a specimen of language most intemperate and extravagant: the succeeding note will form its counterpart. The doctrine of the Trinity “is the parent stock of all that system of error which has branched out into all the various forms of reputed orthodox, darkening with its deadly shade the brightness of the divine character, and shedding its poisonous influences upon the best charities of human nature.” *Mudge’s Sermon before the Unitarian Fund*, 1815. p. 13.

shew in the flesh ;” but “ by their fruits ye shall know them,” is the direction of our Lord. But in no case should we be forward to pass judgment on the final states of men—“ to their own master do they stand or fall.” We may, indeed, express affectionately our apprehensions, that their errors may be dangerous or fatal, but while within the regions of hope and mercy, we can go no farther : and as to the deceased we have certainly no right to assign them to the abodes of damnation, when, for ought we know, God may have pardoned and received them to himself*.

This tenderness to men’s persons is not however to be extended to their errors, so as to create an indifference to truth. Much has been said by some of the duty of charity to the opinions of others : but I have no charity for *opinions*, nor do I know of such a duty in the Christian code. To the *persons* of all men, however they may differ from us, we owe Christian charity, but what is meant by Charity to opinions? Am I to believe that to be true, which I am convinced is false? Am I to believe that truth is of no importance, either to me, or in the sight of God? Charity to mens’ errors either has no meaning, or a very bad one. But let me not be misunderstood: I do not mean to contradict what I have advanced. Religious Liberty does not rest on Christian charity, it is the *right* of all men.

6. Confine yourself as nearly as possible to the simplicity of the scriptures. It is the folly of being wise above what is written, and the arrogance of attempting to improve on the language of Revelation, which have given rise to a vast

* Much and often have I been shocked at the horrid cut of flames and devils prefixed to Macgowan’s “ Arians and Socinian’s Monitor,” which it must be confessed however, is, very appropriate to the Tract itself. Take the following specimen. “ No sooner (says the damned heretic) was I within these frightful mansions, but *Arius and Socinus* were apprized of my coming by fresh bolts of divine indignation being thundered against their apostate heads.” This language also is so far appropriate, that it must be confessed it is fit only for the infernal regions! And yet we are told at the beginning of the tract, this “ mode” of writing “ was chosen with a view to make it the more *entertaining!*” — Most horrible! a picture of hell, and the damnation of a Christian teacher, for the *entertainment* of pious Christians. It is impossible to calculate the injury such books render to religion.

proportion of the errors of both antients and moderns ; and I am persuaded there is no way of returning to the unanimity of the apostolical age, but by adhering more closely to the language of the apostles—an effect which I trust will follow the present extensive circulation of the Bible.

7. Cherish vital and active piety as the best protection against the danger of religious errors. Those whose lives are devoted to the service of God, and benevolence to men, have little time for idle and dangerous speculations. A devotional habit will preserve us from light thoughts of sin, or degrading notions of the Saviour. It will teach us to refer all events to God, and to acknowledge and adore his providence in all his ways. And here, give me leave to say, is the great advantage of mixing prayer with all our studies and pursuits. The principles of free enquiry and of devotion, act somewhat like the conflicting powers in nature. The former seems to have a tendency to lead out the mind in a right line, like the centrifugal force, while the latter, like the centripetal force, draws it round the centre of religion, and thus confines the mind within the sphere of divine truth. And permit me to add, that the power of attraction is not less potent and universal in religion than in nature. As in the material world, all the particles of matter gravitate to each other, and the whole to a common centre, so it is in the Christian system. All the parts of truth gravitate to each other, and all the truths of Christianity to a common centre, and that centre is the cross of Christ.

- “ Drawn round the focus of the bleeding cross,
- “ Each truth arranges — and th’ accursed tree
- “ Becomes the centre of our faith — our hopes —
- “ Our happiness — our duties, which in concentric circles move,
- “ To brethren, neighbours, country, and mankind.

No. III.

APPENDIX to ESSAY IV.

A brief Enquiry into the authority of the Civil Magistrate, to enforce the observance of the Sabbath.

PUBLIC worship is a branch of natural religion, and the observance of a *seventh* day for its celebration, was a part of the Patriarchal economy long before the Mosaical was instituted. It appears also an institution so wise and benevolent, both to man and the brute creation, that those who have been most averse to devotion, have yet observed a day of rest from labour; though, as it were to cross the divine appointment, they have sometimes varied the period of its recurrence.

Admitting this, however, the question then arises as to the authority of the Magistrate to enforce the observance. And here

1. I *deny* that the magistrate has any authority to compel his subjects to attend any particular place or form of public worship, or to enjoin any devotional services at home. This would be to assume the dominion of conscience; and is contrary to the principles laid down in our introduction.

2. I *deny* that the magistrate has any power to interfere with the domestic arrangement of families, or the manner in which individuals chuse to conduct themselves, so that they do not disturb the rights of others, or prevent their servants or their neighbours from their devout observance of the day. Suppose for instance, a man of no religion, chooses to balance his books on the sabbath, or his wife to work at her needle, provided neither the one or the other compel their servants to do the same, I apprehend the civil authorities have no right to interfere.

3. I *deny* that he has any right to enjoin the religious observance of the Christian Sabbath, on either Mahometans or Jews, who prefer keeping the Friday or Saturday;

any more than upon Pagans who keep no sabbaths at all.—
But,

4. I do *maintain* that the magistrate has a right to enforce the observance of one day in seven, as a day of *rest*, as an institution of the highest antiquity, and of the most extensive obligation;—and especially as it is an institution so good in itself, and so beneficial in its effects. And though he has no right to enforce its religious observance, he has authority to prevent its profanation. So Nehemiah did not insist upon the men of Tyre coming to worship at Jerusalem, though he did forbid their trading upon that day with the Jewst. Neh. xiii. 16. &c.

5. I *insist* that it is his duty to maintain his Christian subjects in the full enjoyment of this privilege, in every way not inconsistent with the rights of others. For this reason, it is necessary for shops, manufactories, and counting-houses to be universally shut up; because otherwise Christians who wish to keep that day sacred, would be disturbed in their devotions, or injured in their trade: if, for instance, two drapery shops being adjacent, the one kept by a Christian the other by an infidel, the latter would circumvent the other in his business: or suppose a tinman or a brazier situated adjoining to a pious family, it would be impossible for the latter to observe the sabbath with comfort or devotion. This also extends to public markets or fairs, which are a great nuisance when suffered on the sabbath day.

6. Notwithstanding this, there are some exceptions universally admitted: cows must be milked, and their milk distributed; cattle must be fed and led to water; and our law allows another exception in the case of mackerel, of which I am not so capable of judging. Bakers also are allowed to heat their ovens, as by the attendance of one or two men for part of the day, perhaps forty or fifty families have the opportunity of attending public worship; beer is also allowed to be drawn between the hours of public worship, and it would be well if it were more strictly so confined.

7. With respect to military duties, I believe both Christians and Jews are pretty well agreed on the lawfulness of self-defence, and of every measure contributing thereto:

but all military parade, where no danger can be pleaded, as it can only disturb the worship of peaceable and pious people, ought certainly to be avoided.

8. The medical profession is allowed on the sabbath, upon the principle of our Saviour, that it is lawful to do good upon the sabbath day; and the physician or surgeon who risks the life, or even the suffering of his patient, through neglect of his visits on this day, is highly censurable; and yet there are few professional men of so extensive business as necessarily to exclude them from attendance on public worship, one part or other of the Sunday, as is evidenced in the conduct of some conscientious men of considerable practice.

9. It has been made a very serious question by some, how far instruction in reading, &c. is lawful or proper on this day. So far as concerns Sunday Schools, I think their utility has been equal to a miracle in their defence; and as respects the Sabbath, it is so much better observed where they are than where they are not instituted, that I think the question answers itself: for it is surely a small sacrifice for three or four young persons to devote a few hours in a day, when thereby as many score children are rescued from the streets, and brought to attend on public worship. The most important view of the subject with me however is, that thereby is promoted the knowledge of the scriptures, as the means of salvation, and as much the ordinance of heaven as public preaching.

But I cannot here enter into this subject fully, as my business is only with the Magistrate's authority, which certainly does not extend to this department. I would only therefore remark, that those persons who oppose Sunday Schools, whether for children or adults, act (though they may not be aware of it) exactly upon the principle of the Pharisees, who persecuted our Lord for *doing good upon the sabbath-day*: and I am persuaded that he wrought many of his miracles on that day on purpose to reprove them; to shew that "the sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath;" and that "the Son of man," therefore, is "Lord also of the sabbath day."

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THE

Duty and Importance

OF

FREE COMMUNION.

AFTER so much has been lately written on the question of open and strict communion by Messrs. Hall, Kinghorn, and others, a *small anonymous pamphlet* on the subject may well be thought to require some apology; that apology may be founded on the circumstance now mentioned. The controversy above referred to has become voluminous and expensive; so much so, as to render it inaccessible to the great mass of Christians, who can neither afford the purchase nor the time. The subject is also here discussed on a more extended ground—not merely as a question among different denominations of Baptists,* practising strict or free

* I may perhaps be told that I should use the term *Anti-pædobaptist*; but it is both a long word and a hard word, two decided objections with me against its frequent use. When I speak of *strict* and *free*, or *mixed*, communion, I mean no reproach. By *strict* Baptists I mean those who restrict their communion to persons who have submitted to adult baptism by immersion; under the other term (*free*, or *mixed*) I comprehend all those who admit Pædobaptists also—and, in short, true Christians of all denominations.

communion, but as extending to other denominations also; the writer's object being to recommend communion, occasional or stated, in the Supper of our Lord, with all his visible family—with "all who love our Lord Jesus," both theirs and ours; and this on the principle that all the visible churches of Christ on earth are but parts or branches of that one catholic or universal church—"the bride, the Lamb's wife."

A *small* pamphlet like this cannot be supposed to comprehend all the arguments which might be adduced, or all the texts by which those arguments might be supported; much less can it be expected to enter into the *pro* and *con* of controversy. All that is attempted is, to furnish materials for those who are able and desirous to think for themselves.

The writer has also chosen to be *anonymous*, at least for the present, that all personalities may be avoided. He brings no charge of bigotry, or improper motives, against either Christian societies or individuals. There are, probably, bigots on both sides; but he addresses good and upright men, equally conscientious with himself.

This, however, will not prevent the use of strong and decided language, in a point which he considers of great importance, especially at the present time, when Christians, of almost every denomination, are using their utmost exertions for the enlargement of the Redeemer's kingdom, and to hasten the glorious period of the Millennium; exertions which, he conceives, must be greatly cramped by strict or sectarian communion, as in the sequel he will attempt to prove.

That, in referring to writers on the exclusive side of this question, the author has chiefly confined himself to Messrs. Booth and Fuller, it is hoped, will be ascribed to no unworthy motive. It is because they are the chief writers on that side of the question with whom he is acquainted; and because, as he believes, the one is considered as the most complete, the other as the most forcible writer on the subject. And though they have now entered into rest from all their controversies, if in any instance they are here misunderstood or misrepresented, of which the writer is not conscious, there are others living of the same sentiment, well able to defend them.

Should any advocate of strict communion condescend to notice these few pages, the writer does not pledge himself to reply; but if he should see it necessary, it will be with studied brevity, being fully determined not to be drawn into the vortex of an angry or protracted controversy. For this reason he has avoided, as much as possible, both parts of the Baptist controversy—the subject and the mode. He has indeed read on both sides, and made up his mind; and his opinion is not likely to be altered, except by evidence he has not yet seen. He has judged for himself, and is quite willing that all his fellow Christians should do the same; and is not aware of any material evil arising from such differences of opinion, when not made the ground of exclusive communion: nor is he sensible of any diminution of affection in his own mind on account of them, when they affect only the minor points of Christianity.

SECTION I.

Of the Unity of the Church.

THE UNITY of the church is a principle generally admitted, but greatly misunderstood. It has been too commonly supposed to consist in harmony of opinions, and in uniformity of rites and ceremonies. This subject, therefore, requires some explanation. And,

1. When I speak of the unity of the Christian church, I refer not to any national or particular church, but to all the congregations of the faithful throughout the world: for I cannot for a moment think of confining the Christian character, or the benefits of salvation, to a party, or to a nation, but include all “who in every place call upon the name of the Lord Jesus;” and perfectly agree with the doctrine of our English reformers, as expressed in the 20th Article of the Establishment, that “The visible church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men, in the which the pure word of God is preached, and the sacraments be duly administered, according to Christ’s ordinance, in all those things that of *necessity* are requisite to the same.” I may add, in the words of Dr. *Mason*, of New York—“None whom these pages address will pretend, that there are no true Christians in the world but themselves, and no true churches but their own—that all others are mere heathens, and all their churches synagogues of Satan. The very idea of such arrogance is abhorred by those whose feel-

ings and practice are most adverse to free communion."*

2. When I speak of the UNITY of the church, I refer to a unity of faith and devotion—not of opinions and religious rites.

(1.) It is a unity of *faith*, and not of opinions; that is, it is confined to first and fundamental principles. This may be illustrated by a reference to the *Bible Society* and its different members, who, though of a variety of sects and parties, have all one object, the dissemination of the word of God. Or we may refer to the Bible itself, in which all believers recognize certain fundamental principles, though on going into a minute detail scarcely two individuals would, perhaps, explain themselves exactly in the same terms. So, in defending these fundamental articles, some would prefer, in proof, one text of scripture, and some another, with considerable variety.

(2.) It is a unity of *devotion*, and not of rites. Some Christians chuse to worship with a form, and some without. Some pray kneeling, and others standing, &c. But it has often been remarked, that, in the extemporaneous devotions of good men, (and I presume there are none but do *sometimes* pray extemporally,) there is much greater harmony than in either their public discourses or private controversies. And whence is this? Partly, I conceive, because they confine themselves in prayer more closely to the simple language of the Scriptures; but chiefly because, in the exercise of devotion, they are under the more immediate in-

* Plea for Catholic Communion, page 9.

fluence of the Spirit of God, the Author of all true concord and genuine devotion.

In reflecting on the diffusion and general perusal of the Scriptures, I have sometimes thought there is more truth than some have been willing to allow, in their tendency to produce a variety of opinions. The fact is, that those who are debarred from the Scriptures seldom inquire into religious subjects. They think as the church thinks, and pin their faith on the priest's sleeve: but when they come to think for themselves, on all the minor points of Christianity they will form a variety of opinions, and perhaps discover the unsuspected fact, that among *thinking* persons there are no two who think in *all* points perfectly alike, even upon religion: and yet there may be a perfect harmony in first principles and fundamentals.

There is a passage of Scripture which on this subject ought to be attentively considered. It is a part of the office of the Holy Spirit to lead believers into truth; and our excellent translators, through a slight inadvertence, by overlooking the article in the original, have rendered the text, "he shall lead you into ALL truth;" that is, as many have understood it, into every branch of religious truth; whereas (as the learned Bishop *Lowth* long since observed) the passage should be rendered, "into all THE truth;"* that is, into a knowledge of the gospel method of salvation. This is commonly called "*the truth*;" † and so far, sooner or

* *Lowth's* Eng. Gram. note, p. 12, (ed. 1764.) See also Campbell on John xvi. 13.

† Gal. iii. 1. (O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you that ye should not obey THE TRUTH!) *et al. freq.*

later, all true Christians are brought into a unity of faith.

(3.) But there is another point of union principally referred to in the Scriptures, a unity of heart. Our Lord had foretold—"By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." And of the first Christians it is said, they "were of one heart and one soul."* This is a union of Christian charity: and is a principal ground, though certainly not the primary one, of their holding communion with each other in the Lord's Supper; and the elements partaken are tokens, not *only* representative of the body and blood of Christ, but also of the union of believers. "For we, (says the Apostle Paul,) being many, are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread."† How strange is it, then, that any Christians, who are parts of this mystic bread, members of "the body of Christ," whose death is thus commemorated, should be considered as incapacitated for communion with each other?

In speaking of the unity of the church, Mr. *Hall* says, "Whoever forms his ideas of the church of Christ from the New Testament, will perceive that *unity* is one of its essential characteristics; and that though it be branched out into many distinct societies, it is still but one. "The church (says Cyprian) is one, which by reason of its fecundity is extended into a multitude, in the same manner as the rays of the sun, however numerous, constitute but one light; and the

* John xiii. 35. Acts iv. 32.

† 1 Cor. x. 17.

“ branches of a tree, however many, are attached
 “ to one trunk, which is supported by its tena-
 “ cious root: and when various rivers flow from
 “ the same fountain, though number is diffused by
 “ the redundant supply of waters, unity is pre-
 “ served in their origin.” Nothing more abhorrent
 from the principles and maxims of the sacred
 oracles can be conceived, than the idea of a
 plurality of churches, neither in *actual* communion
 with each other, nor in a *capacity* for such com-
 munion. Though this rending of the seamless
 garment of the Saviour, this schism in the mem-
 bers of his mystical body, is by far the greatest
 calamity which has befallen the Christian interest,
 and one of the most fatal effects of the great
 apostacy foretold by the sacred penman, we have
 been so long familiarised to it, as to be scarcely
 sensible of its enormity; nor does it excite sur-
 prise or concern in any degree proportioned to
 what would be felt by one who had contemplated
 the church in the first ages.” *

* Terms of Communion, p. 1, 2.

SECTION II.

Of the ONE Baptism essential to Christian Communion.

HERE I fully admit that there is *a* baptism necessary to communion, and I contend also that it is equally necessary to salvation; for I consider the terms of communion and of salvation to be the same; and that Christian churches are bound to receive into their communion all whom they have sufficient reason to believe the Lord Jesus has received into communion with himself.*

Formerly, indeed, there were divers baptisms; as of Moses and of the Jews, of John and of the apostles, *prior* to the institution of the Lord's Supper; but with these, I conceive, we have now no immediate concern. Certainly the baptism of Moses was not Christian baptism, nor even that of John; or the disciples at Ephesus would not have been re-baptized "in the name of the Lord Jesus," as it appears they were.†

That baptism which can alone with strictness be denominated "the baptism of Christ," is the baptism of the Holy Ghost. So said John, emphatically called the Baptist—"He that cometh after me shall baptize you with the Holy

* Mr. Booth (*Apol.* p. 106) objects to this the case of persons excluded from church communion for "scandalous backslidings," (as the incestuous Corinthian,) of whom yet there might be hope—but the question is not here of *hope*; but whether we can have "reason to believe" Christ has received into communion with himself "scandalous" backsliders, while living in incest or adultery? Mr. Booth surely would not answer in the affirmative.

† Acts xix. 5.

Ghost, and with fire." And again, to John it was revealed—"Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and abiding on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost."* Again, Jesus after his resurrection, said, "John truly baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost, not many days hence."† The full accomplishment of this promise on the day of Pentecost is well known, and need not here be insisted on: but some have, on the other hand, confined the baptism of the Spirit to his miraculous powers *only*, which is equally inconsistent, since both our Lord and his apostles insist upon the necessity of divine influences to form a Christian—"Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of heaven—If any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of his."†

The fact is, the evangelists and apostles were popular writers, and were easily understood by the common people; but they often mixed the figurative style with the literal, in a manner perfectly familiar to the inhabitants of eastern countries, but which appears to us unnatural and obscure. In studying the sacred writers, however, we should endeavour rather to enter into *their* style than to reduce them to *our* standard of precision. The baptism of the Holy Ghost intends an abundant portion of his influences, which are to be understood as either miraculous or moral, according to the context, or the subject spoken of: the former affording those extraordinary aids required in the first propagation of the Gospel—the lat-

* Matt. iii. 11. John i. 33.

† Acts i. 5.

‡ John iii. 5. Rom. viii. 9.

ter that moral or spiritual influence necessary to the conversion of every sinner to the end of time.

But let us inquire more particularly into the *one* baptism necessary both to communion and salvation. The Apostle Paul says, in addressing the Ephesians—"There is one body, and one Spirit, even as you are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, ONE BAPTISM; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all."* Here it appears to me exceedingly incongruous to class a mere external ordinance among these great essential truths, in preference to the sovereign influences of the Holy Spirit, who is expressly named in the first member of the text. St. Paul confirms our interpretation when speaking of circumcision; and, comparing it with baptism, he says, "in whom (Christ) ye are circumcised:" but mark, it is "with the circumcision made *without* hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: buried"—here the analogy seems to warrant us to add "without hands" also, for one is as capable of a spiritual interpretation as the other, and the following words require it—"Buried with him (Christ) in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead."† I know that it has been commonly supposed, even by Pædobaptists, that here is an allusion to the original mode of baptism; but if so, I think it is a very distant one, and refers rather to the manner

* Ephes. iv. 4—6.

† Col. ii. 11, 12.

in which Christ was baptized than to the practice of the church: as if he had said—that, like as Christ was baptized by John with (or in) water, that he might “fulfil all righteousness,” so believers are baptized with the Holy Spirit, in which baptism (not of water, but of the Spirit) “ye (says the Apostle) are risen with him,”—not through the washing of water, but—“through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.”

In another Epistle, the same sacred writer seems more explicit. It must be recollected that the union of Christ with his Church was a favourite topic of this apostle. “They are one body—he is the head and they are the members:” they therefore partake with him in all the parts of his mediatorial work; they suffer and are crucified with him—they die and are buried with him—they are raised, ascend and sit with him in heavenly places; and why one branch only of this communion with him is to be explained in allusion to an external rite, namely *burial*, is what I do not understand*—for certainly there is no allusion, in speaking of his crucifixion, to the form of our Lord’s extension on the cross. But let us hear the Apostle. “Know ye not that so many of us, as were (or are) baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by bap-

* If as Mr. Robinson insists, (History of Baptism, p. 7.) and I think with great appearance of reason, baptism in its original form was an act of worship—the subject bowing forwards as he entered the water, and not being bent backward, as is the modern practice—then the allusion to the form of burial wholly disappears; for I know of no nation, which buries their dead upon their faces—and certainly neither the Greeks nor Romans did so.

tism into death: that, like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him.* Now all this is the effect, evidently not of water baptism, nor of any external rite; but of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, whereby we are crucified with Christ, die unto sin, are buried from the pleasures of the world—raised unto newness of life—and in fact are brought into the New Jerusalem—to communion with the general assembly of the first-born—to God the Judge of all—to Jesus the Mediator of the new Covenant,† &c. Compare this with the passage, on which we are now reasoning, and is it not conclusive, that the “one baptism” essential both to salvation and communion, is the baptism of the Holy Ghost?

This passage is rendered still clearer by comparing it with the language of the Apostle Peter, who speaks also of Baptism as *saving* us; but is particularly careful to guard against supposing he meant *water* baptism. Before I quote that verse, however, I beg to refer to the preceding context, as calculated to throw light upon the whole subject. The Apostle is speaking of Noah and his family being “saved by water: the like figure whereunto

* Rom. vi. 3—8.

† Heb. xii. 22, 23.

baptism doth now save us.”* But here is no allusion to the form of baptism. Noah neither went “down into” the water, nor came up “out of it:” for he was borne above it, and never left the ark till it rested on dry land: but the point of comparison rests here:—as the Patriarch was borne above every danger by the water supporting the ark; so Christians are raised from sin and death “by baptism;” but by what baptism? “Not the putting away the filth of the flesh”—which water baptism might do; but the baptism of the Holy Spirit, affording “the answer (or confession) of a good conscience towards God;” and this is as Paul also saith, “through the resurrection of Christ, who is gone into heaven,” &c. And then he reasons on the same principles as the Apostle of the Gentiles, for the necessity of dying to sin, and living to God.

Thus I have endeavoured to shew that the “one baptism” on which the New Testament writers lay so much stress, is not merely the baptism of water, though sometimes alluded to, or accompanied with it; but the baptism predicted by John, promised by Jesus, and bestowed on all believers, at once qualifying them for communion, both with Christ and with his Church.

These observations, will perhaps, best account for the stress very early laid upon baptism as essential to salvation: some confounded water-baptism with the baptism of the Spirit; calling the former “regeneration, illumination,” &c. and, substituting the sign for the thing signified—the external rite for the internal grace—they falsely inferred the neces-

* 1 Pet. iii. 21.

sity of the one, from the acknowledged necessity of the other.

To return to water baptism, as a term of communion: if it be not necessary to constitute a Christian, neither, can it be absolutely necessary to Christian communion: for what is Christian communion, but the communion of Christians with each other, and with their Lord? of which “the breaking of bread, and of prayers,” are equally constituent parts, as will be seen under the next section.

SECTION III.

On the alleged Connection between Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

EXPLAINING the *one* Christian baptism, of the baptism of the Holy Ghost, as done in the preceding section, I cannot object to *this* being considered as a pre-requisite to church communion: I am now, however, to consider the opinion of the *strict* Baptists (as they are called for distinction sake)—that the external rite of *water* baptism, and that, administered by immersion and to adults only, is equally essential to such communion. This leads us to the important inquiry, as stated by Mr. Fuller, and other able advocates of strict communion, “Has baptism [literally understood] any

such instituted connection with the Lord's Supper as to be a pre-requisite to it?" *

Could this be proved, however, I am not sure it would decide the question. It might prove it to be the duty of all believers to be baptized previously to their approaching the Lord's table; but still it must rest with their own consciences, to adopt that mode or form which they conceive to be of divine appointment; and most certainly if they, on candid inquiry, conceive themselves to have been validly baptized in infancy, this connection will not prove that they ought to receive adult baptism also, before they approach the holy table: much less will "such instituted connection" prove that their fellow Christians have a right to exclude them from the Lord's table, because they do not view the question respecting baptism in the same light with themselves. Let us, however, enter a little farther into the inquiry: and here I would remark—

1. Neither in the institution of John's baptism, nor in that practised by the disciples of our Lord Jesus during his ministry, do we find the most distant allusion to the Lord's Supper, which indeed was not then instituted; and though the Lord's Supper *was* instituted prior to the commission under which the apostles, and their successors in the ministry, have since continued to baptize, yet was there no distinct mention of it in that commission: neither was there any reference to baptism in the institution of the Lord's Supper.

* Fuller's Letter on the admission of unbaptised persons to the Lord's table, p. 10.

2. The objects of the two institutions are perfectly distinct; baptism being an initiatory ordinance, professing discipleship; the Lord's Supper a commemorative institution, having a retrospective view to the death and atonement of the Saviour: the one may be administered to an individual, the other is an institution expressly adapted for Christian communion; the one referring to the mediatorial work of the Redeemer, the other to the operations of the Holy Spirit.

3. I have said, the institution of baptism, after our Lord's resurrection, contains no express reference to the Lord's Supper. This is disputed. Let us hear Mr. Fuller, than whom no man was able to state an argument more clearly, or urge it more forcibly.

This excellent man argues, that, as in the administration of the Lord's Supper the delivering of the cup after the bread proves the necessity of administering the sacrament in "both hands," so the manner in which teaching, baptizing, and the observance of *all things* commanded, are arranged in the original commission, shew the order in which these ordinances are to be connected. "Let us (says Mr. F.) read the commission:—"Go—teach all nations—baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost—teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you—and lo! I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." "Is it not (adds Mr. F.) plainly the order of things, as stated by our Lord Jesus Christ—that we are first to *teach* men, by imparting to them the Gospel; then, on their believing it, to *baptize* them; and then to go on to

instruct them in all the ordinances and commandments which are left by Christ for our direction?" *

I perfectly agree with Mr. Fuller, that, on every theological question, we must content ourselves with the information which the Scriptures give, and have no right to ask for more, or to complain of its not being so explicit as we could wish: also, that the order in which circumstances are placed may sometimes throw light upon their connection and dependances; but here I can find no such arrangement, farther than the undisputed fact, that the Gospel was to be preached to the heathen previous to their being proselyted, and that afterwards they were to be farther instructed in the doctrines and duties of Christianity. But it is a mere assumption that this instruction refers first and principally to the Lord's Supper, which is not even named, though doubtless included in the *all* things commanded. But if we look back to our Lord's last discourses with his disciples on this very occasion, I think we shall find something far more emphatically enjoined—"By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, that ye love one another."

Mr. Fuller here remarks, as evidently, in his view, conclusive on this subject—"All the recorded facts in the New Testament place baptism before the celebration of the Supper." But such also is the order in which Pædopabtists place them; and supposing them to be mistaken as to the validity of infant baptism, yet here is no in-

* Fuller's Letter, p. 12.

† Letter, p. 4.

version of the order, as they do not baptize after admitting to the Holy Supper. Here, therefore, is no contradiction to the primitive example.

But to advert again to recorded facts : Mr. Fuller indeed mentions it as an unquestionable fact, that “ the first company who joined together at the Lord’s table were *all* baptized.” * But Mr. Hall denies this, as to *Christian* baptism, believing that many of the apostles and first disciples had received no baptism but that of John ; and Mr. Fuller has not attempted to prove the contrary : the fact is therefore at least questionable. But suppose it to be certain ; Pædobaptists are conscientiously satisfied that they have also received Christian baptism ; and who shall deny them the right of private judgment ?

This champion of strict communion, however, proves, what is indeed literally asserted by St. Luke, the first church historian, that all those who were “ added to the church ” by conversion, “ continued steadfast ” in the apostle’s doctrine, in *breaking of bread*, and in prayers ; ” and though this will not absolutely prove, that they had all received Christian baptism (although I do not contend to the contrary) it *does* prove, as I conceive, that all who were admitted to fellowship with the apostles “ in doctrine and in prayers, ” were admitted also to communion with them “ in breaking of bread ; ” which is contrary to the practice of strict Baptists : they admit Pædobaptists to communion in all other devotional exercises, and to preach for them even on communion days, and yet exclude them from

* Letter, p. 15.

“the breaking of bread” with them. But if the mention of baptism before the Lord’s Supper, or “breaking of bread” proves, that it must necessarily precede it, then assuredly the mention of “breaking of bread” before “prayers,” (meaning doubtless, social prayers,) will equally exclude all unbaptized persons (so considered) from communion in prayers, as well as the Lord’s Supper—which is farther, I presume, than any of our Baptist friends wish to carry it.—This argument, therefore, of the order of the terms, by proving too much, proves in fact nothing.

But our excellent opponent (as others have done before him) conceives, that he has found such a connection as is above supposed, in the following well known passage of St. Paul:—“Moreover, brethren, I would not ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and were all baptized unto Moses, in the cloud and in the sea; and did all eat the same spiritual meat; and did all drink the same spiritual drink; for they drank of that rock that followed them, and that rock was Christ.”* In the first place, the occasional mention of two ordinances in the same paragraph will not prove their dependance on each other, any more than our naming together the Missions to Greenland and to India, will imply a similar connection or dependance.

Again, baptism “unto Moses” was not Christian baptism; nor had, as I conceive, any allusion to it, except very remotely. Still more remote is the

* 1 Cor. x. 1—5.

supposed reference to the Lord's Supper, in speaking of the manna and the miraculous water. What then is the spiritual import of the passage? Baptism in the cloud unto Moses, I suppose, refers to baptism unto Christ by the Holy Spirit, which was promised to be poured out from on high upon believers. If immersion in water had been here intended, surely the Egyptians, and not the Israelites were thus immersed. The figure here appears to me somewhat analogous to that of St. Peter, in comparing the ark to baptism in a passage above considered. The Israelites like Noah's family were saved, not *by* immersion, but from it. But how did the cloud save them? We are told, that the Lord sent a strong east wind, that caused a retrocession of the sea *all night*; and the cloud which had gone hitherto before them, was now placed behind them; and while to the Egyptians it carried storm and darkness, to the Israelites it was a cloud of fire and of light: they were then not baptized with water, but with *fire*, which the apostle here, in harmony with our Lord's own language, compares with the baptism of the Holy Spirit. As to the manna and the water, our Lord himself explains them without any allusion to the Supper, which was not then instituted, and to which, therefore, he could not refer in his conversation with the Jews; though he might and did refer to that atonement, on which the latter ordinance was founded.*

But is there not such "an instituted connection" between baptism and the Lord's Supper, as to

* John vi. 51.

make the last in itself improper unless preceded by the former? A Pædobaptist might indeed trace an analogy between these New Testament ordinances, and the Old Testament sacraments of circumcision and the passover; but an anti-pædobaptist cannot consistently attempt this; nor would he admit any force in the argument, when urged by the Pædobaptist.* Baptism is indeed an entrance on the Christian profession; and, when applied to children, with a view to initiating them into a Christian education, is so far in conformity with the injunction of “*teaching* them.” This, however, is only meant as an incidental remark; it not being, as already stated, the author’s design to enter on the Pædobaptist controversy. But supposing Pædobaptism to be a nullity, it is not so considered by those who practise it, and, therefore, does not annul the duty of commemorating their Lord’s death, as we shall have farther occasion to observe.

We are bound to act in all cases, to the best of our judgment, according to the evidence before us; and if our error be unintentional, and affect not things necessary to salvation, we serve not Moses, but a Master, who graciously accepts our imperfect services, and atones for our mistakes.

There are many points, indeed, on which we could wish for clearer and more decided evidence; but instead of complaining of this circumstance, it should teach us to be candid, and not dogmatical, since all the truths of revelation, generally speaking, are revealed with a clearness proportioned to their importance in the Christian system; and in the same proportion do they demand our credence.

* Booth’s Apol. p. 85.

SECTION IV.

On Mutual Toleration among Christians.

WE must here distinguish toleration into external and internal. The former resting on secular authority, has no right to interfere with mental error, unconnected with moral pravity: the latter, resting between members of the same society is mutual, and consists in “bearing one another’s burdens”—whether they be infirmities or griefs—“and so fulfilling the law of Christ.” It extends to every infirmity that is not sinful, and to every error that affects neither the foundation, nor the vitals of religion.

Christianity in its nature is a tolerant and comprehensive system; not sectarian or exclusive. This is indeed its great and distinguishing feature, and places it in opposition to Judaism, which was the religion of a particular nation, and the divine authority of which ceased only just before that nation was broken up and scattered. But Christianity, consisting not in external observances, though such may be connected with it, is equally adapted for all ages and countries, and is not liable to be superseded by any other dispensation.

The Apostle Paul particularly insists on the tolerant character of Christianity, in speaking of the patriarchal rites of circumcision and the Sabbath, and of clean and unclean food, which laws though afterwards incorporated in the Jewish system,

were of much higher antiquity, and some of them antient as the human race. “Circumcision (says St. Paul,) is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God” *—that is every thing. So had the apostle lived at a period of the church, when baptism by a particular form had been made the term of communion, I persuade myself he would have said, ‘Adult baptism is nothing, and infant baptism is nothing—immersion is nothing, and sprinkling is nothing, comparatively speaking—but keeping the commandment of God is every thing, “and this is his commandment, that we love one another.” †

It is the object of the Gospel, not to separate or scatter, but to “gather together in Christ all things (or persons) redeemed by him, whether in earth or in heaven.” The church militant and church triumphant, are, in fact, not two churches, but one church—“the bride, the Lamb’s wife;” for Christ is not a polygamist. Now, this is not urged as a direct, but a presumptive argument against principles of unnecessary exclusion; and in favour of a comprehension, as large as Christian charity requires. It is the very spirit of the Gospel to unite Christians, and it is the spirit of heresy and schism to separate them.

The grounds of Christian communion are laid in the union of the church, (as is shown in a preceding section;) believers being received as members of Christ’s mystical body, this is made both the ground and measure of their receiving one another. We are to receive those whom “God hath re-

* 1 Cor. vii. † 1 John iii. 23.

ceived,"* and that "not to doubtful disputations"—not to enter into controversy with them on points unessential to salvation.

Again, it is commanded, "Receive ye one another;" that is, those who are strong in faith are ordered to receive their weak brethren, "even," saith the Apostle, "as Christ received us." And how was that? Certainly, with infinite kindness and compassion to weak and mistaken brethren.

It has, indeed, been doubted, whether the receiving above mentioned has any relation to communion with the church; but what else can it mean here, when this is the very subject in question, and when the reception of the party by Christ is made the ground and argument of their reception among their brethren?

We are ready to admit, indeed, that the reception of Christian brethren, as enjoined in the New Testament, was not confined to the act of Christian communion, but included every other act of brotherly kindness; yet, surely, there is no instance of receiving a Christian brother or sister, which did not include that act of communion specially designed to express their union with each other, and with their Lord. Was Phebe, or Epaphroditus, or Onesimus, or the Apostle himself, (which are the cases mentioned by Mr. Booth,†) to be received only in the way of charity, or friendship, and to be excluded from the Lord's table?

A great deal has been also said about the strictness required in conformity to the positive institutions of the Levitical law, in order to deter us

* Rom. xiv. 3.

† Apol. p. 101-2.

from varying any circumstance of a positive institution. But we are not under Moses; and yet, even Moses allowed of a trespass offering in all cases of involuntary error, or ceremonial defilement; and in cases where circumstances prevented an exact attention to the Mosaical ritual; when “the heart was prepared,” those ritual irregularities were “winked at,” to use a scriptural expression, and the offenders were were not “cut off from the congregation.” Nor is there any example, that I am aware of, in the New Testament, where the omission of a ritual observance is made a ground of exclusion from the full communion of the Christian church.

SECTION V.

The Question historically considered—as to mixed or exclusive Communion.

IN viewing the question *historically*, our strict Baptist friends contend that no persons were admitted into the communion of the primitive church without previous baptism; on the other hand, the advocates of mixed or Catholic communion are equally confident, that none were excluded from that communion for any difference of opinion, not affecting the vitals or fundamentals of Christianity.

Both parties presume, that during the lives of the Apostles, no difference of faith or practice could obtain among the primitive Christians; and yet it appears, both from the acts and apostolical epistles, that certain questions did arise, on which even their authority was reluctantly submitted to,

though their decision was always in favour of toleration, amity and forbearance. There does not appear, however, to have been any question then raised as to the subjects or mode of baptism.

But it is, on all hands, admitted, that such differences arose early in the third century, if not before; and they are accounted for on principles diametrically opposite. Pædobaptists, believing infant baptism to be an apostolical practice, account for its disuse from a superstitious notion of the unpardonable nature of sins after baptism, which we know influenced many to postpone the ordinance to a late period of their lives, as was the case even with the Emperor Constantine.

On the other hand, our Baptist friends maintain, that the baptism (or sprinkling, as they call it,) of infants, arose from a mistaken opinion of the necessity of water-baptism to salvation, and thus originated the doctrine of baptismal regeneration. Wishing as much as possible to avoid the question of the right of infant baptism, I simply state the fact that such a difference of opinion did exist; and call upon the advocates of strict communion to show, that, at this early period, those who refused to baptise infants, banished from their communion those who did. On this subject, however, I shall quote the words of Mr. *Hall*, who, it must be recollected, is himself avowedly a Baptist.

“Supposing the modern practice (so Mr. Hall calls infant baptism,) to have been first introduced towards the end of the second, or the beginning of the third century, (which corresponds to the time at which it is distinctly noticed by Tertullian, the first writer who explicitly mentions it,) we cannot

suppose a shorter space was requisite to procure it that complete establishment and ascendancy, which it possessed in the time of St. Austin. During that long interval there must have been some who still adhered to the primitive practice, and others who favoured and adopted the more recent innovations; there must, in other words, have been Baptists and Pædobaptists cotemporary with each other. What became of that portion of the ancient church, which refused to adopt the baptism of infants? Did they separate from their brethren, in order to form distinct and exclusive societies? Of this not the faintest trace or vestige is to be found in ecclesiastical history; and the supposition is completely confuted by the concurrent testimony of ancient writers to the universal incorporation of orthodox Christians into one grand community. We challenge our opponents to produce the shadow of evidence in favour of the existence, during that long tract of time, of a single society, of which adult baptism was the distinguishing characteristic. Tertullian, it is acknowledged, is the first who distinctly and unequivocally adverts to the contrary practice; and as he expresses disapprobation of it at the same time, without the remotest intimation of the propriety of making it the ground of separation, he must be allowed to form one instance of the practice of mixed communion; and unless we are disposed to assert, that the modern innovation in the rite of baptism supplanted the original ordinance at once, multitudes must have been in precisely the same situation.”*

* Hall's Reply to Kinghorn, p. 219.

“ For two centuries, therefore, (says Mr. Hall,) the predecessors of the present Baptists unani- mously approved and practised a mixed commu- nion—a communion in which Baptists and Pædobaptists united in the same societies.”*

“ After the commencement of the fourth cen- tury, down to the era of the Reformation, (pro- ceeds Mr. Hall,†) the baptism of infants was firmly established, and prevailed to such an extent, that few traces of the ordinance, in its primitive state, are to be discerned. Many of the Waldenses, however, are judged, with great appearance of evidence, to have held opinions on that subject, coincident with those by which we, as a denomi- nation, are distinguished. By their persecutors of the Romish community, they were usually stig- matised and reproached for holding the Anabap- tists’ heresy; while it appears, on the contrary, that there were not wanting among them some who practised the baptism of infants. These op- posite statements, exhibited with equal confidence on this obscure branch of ecclesiastical history, are best reconciled and accounted for, by suppos- ing them divided in their sentiments on that par- ticular. No indication, however, is discoverable of a rupture in external communion having oc- curred on that account; and from the acknow- ledged difficulty of ascertaining the separate exist- ence of Baptist societies, during the middle ages, and until the period of the Reformation, the ne- cessary inference is, either that there were none during that interval, who adhered to the primitive institute, or, as is far more probable, that they

* Hall’s Reply to Kinghorn, p. 219.

† Ibid. p. 221.

were mingled and incorporated with persons of another persuasion."

That baptism, in some form or other, was considered as a pre-requisite to communion, may, as a *general* position, be admitted; but that a difference of opinion, as to either the subject or mode, was made a ground of exclusive communion, is what I have never yet seen proved, and therefore cannot admit. On the contrary, Dr. *Mason*, of New York, contends, and I think successfully, that no difference "in rites and customs in worship—nor imperfections in moral discipline—nor diversities in the form of government—nor dissonant views on subordinate points of doctrine"—divided the communion of Christians in the first and purest ages. He instances, particularly, in the time of keeping Easter—and on the validity of the baptism of heretics; and quotes Firmilianus, Bishop of Cæsarea, in Cappadocia, about A. D. 256, as follows, in addressing the celebrated Cyprian:—

"That they who are at Rome do not entirely observe all things which have been handed down from the beginning; and that they appeal in vain to apostolic authority for their own usages, any one may know from the fact of his seeing that there are some differences among them about the days on which the Pascal Feast is to be kept, and about many other particulars of divine worship; and that they have not precisely the same observances there as prevail in Jerusalem. So likewise, in a very great number of other provinces, many things vary, according to the diversity of place and people; but nevertheless, *these variations have at no time infringed the peace and unity*

of the Catholic church, which Stephanus [Bishop of Rome] has now dared to do; breaking that peace in regard to you, which his predecessors always maintained with you [the African churches] in mutual love and honour." * To the same effect Dr. M. quotes also Augustine, Bishop of Hippo.

A like tolerance was observed, not only among the Waldenses, which is a strong and incontrovertible fact; † but, even in later times, the Church of England received to its highest honours, as in the instances of Tillotson and Secker, persons baptized by ministers not episcopally ordained. So far, therefore, is it from true, as Mr. Booth supposed, that free communion originated with John Bunyan and his contemporaries in the 17th century, ‡ that it was not till about that time that communion was broken on that account. Archbishop Laud's rejecting communion with the Hugonout churches in France, in 1634, is the first instance, according to Dr. Mason, of such a breach of communion among Protestants; and this was followed, ten years afterwards, by the English Baptists, then called Anabaptists, § who first, at that period, so far as I can learn, insisted upon strict communion.

* Plea for Catholic Communion, p. 51.

† That *part* of the Waldenses rejected infant baptism, is largely proved by Mr. Jones, in his History of that excellent people; and that part of them practised it, is also admitted by him, (see his letter, Evan. Mag. vol. xxvii. p. 504); but where is the proof that they separated communion on that account?

‡ Apol. for the Baptists, p. 24, 31, &c.

§ Plea, p. 209, 251.

SECTION VI.

On the Assumption of a Right of Exclusion, and the Evils arising from the exclusive Principle.

THE reverend authors of the History of Dissenters have ventured to say, “It is little less than high treason, nay it is more than high treason” for men “to make the laws of Christ of none effect by their canons; and to exclude from the benefit of his institutions, those whom he commands them to receive.”*

I am very far from charging the advocates of strict communion with *intentional usurpation* of Christ’s authority; nor indeed would I charge this even on the Pope himself, who may very possibly persuade himself, that the keys of the kingdom of heaven are given to him, as they were to Peter: but I conceive conversion to be a ticket of admission, against which any door-keeper of a Christian church turns the key at his peril, unless he has reason to suspect a forgery.

I have already shewn that the church of Christ is ONE: but in this it is self-evident, that I do not mean one local society—that is clearly impossible; but that every converted person—every one baptized with the Holy Ghost, (which is emphatically Christ’s baptism,) becomes thereby a member of “the church of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven;” and is also rendered eligible to be a member of any particular church on earth, by giving credible evidence of that important change.

* History of Dissenters, vol. i. p. 294.

Now, 1st, It appears to me to be an infringement of the right of our Lord Jesus Christ, as King in Zion, for any persons, forming a Christian society, to reject from *their* church, those whom Christ has received into *his*. It may be said, they are “weak brethren,” and possibly *mistaken* brethren; but if they *are* brethren, it is enough. St. Paul requires that they be received, and that not to doubtful disputations, (as we have already seen,) but in Christian love and charity—to the communion of his church and of his table. Indeed, the late Mr. Robinson, (though sufficiently zealous for baptism,) if I mistake not, resolves the whole into this question, “Whose table is it?” It is the Lord’s table, and spread for the Lord’s people.

2. It is a violation of the “royal law,” as St. James calls the law of love. “By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another.” But, to exclude our Christian brethren from that ordinance, which was appointed at once as a memorial of the Saviour’s love and as a means of cementing their love to each other, is not the way to induce the world to say of us—“See how these Christians love!”

Mr. Booth, indeed, denies that the Lord’s Supper was “appointed to be a *test* of brotherly love among the people of God;” and certainly this was not the primary object of the institution: but when the loaf of communion is made an image of Christ’s mystical body, the church, and when the different members, in participating together of that bread, are represented as cemented into one body thereby,* the union and communion of Christians in

* 1 Cor. x. 17. See above, p. 7.

that ordinance must be admitted to be a secondary object of its appointment. Nor should Christians ever forget that precept, which was not only given, but often repeated in the conversation at the holy table, and made to arise out of the primary design of the institution: "This is my commandment, That ye love one another, *as I have loved you.*" *

3. Strict or separate communion does violence also to the finer feelings of the Christian character. I am not charging the friends of strict communion with a want of Christian feeling—so far from it, I doubt not that they sacrifice their feelings to their consciences. Gladly would they embrace their Pædobaptist brethren in every mean of Christian communion, were they not deterred by the fear of violating a positive institution: but may I not beg them to consider, whether it be not a strong presumption against their interpretation of the divine law, that it does violence, not indeed to our natural feelings only, but to those which arise from principles of Christian charity, implanted in the heart by the Holy Spirit himself?

Mr. Fuller, in reasoning on this point, is guilty of an inconclusiveness in argument, with which he is not often chargeable; and at the same time rather confirms than weakens the above train of observation. Mr. F. admits that the exclusion of pious and eminent Pædobaptists from their communion is an act of self-denial. "But in thus denying ourselves, (he says,) it has been farther said, 'we deny some of the best feelings of the human heart.' This (adds Mr. F.) I cannot admit. The best feelings of the human heart are

* John xv. 12.

those of love and obedience to God: and if I deny myself of the *pleasure* which fellowship with a Christian brother would afford me, for the sake of acting up to the mind of Christ, or according to primitive example, I do not deny myself the best feelings of the human heart, but on the contrary forego the less for the greater.* Now had a Socinian thus reasoned, the acumen of this excellent man would have detected it in a moment. For how stands the argument? Baptists do not deny “*some* of the best feelings of the human heart,” because its very “*best* feelings are those of love and obedience to God!” But are not love and charity to our fellow Christians for Christ’s sake, *also* “*some* of the best feelings of the human heart?” And do these not arise from love and obedience to a command given on this very occasion, and repeated in a variety of forms—“See that ye love one another?” If we say, love to God is the first and great command, then must we say that the second, to love our neighbour as ourselves, “is like unto it;” and love to God and man, to Christ and his people, are certainly the best feelings of the human—and of the renewed heart!

But what sort of a self-denying doctrine is this?—to deny ourselves the pleasures of brotherly love and Christian communion!! Surely, this is not the self-denial enjoined upon us in the Gospels. But I cannot conclude this point without introducing an anecdote from Dr. *Mason*, of New York, respecting himself, which, while it proves the fact that exclusive communion *does* violence to “the best feelings of the human heart,”

* Fuller’s Letter, p. 28.

shews also what should be the consequence of a conviction of this fact.

“ One of these occasions (says the Doctor) it is impossible for him to forget. He had been distributing tokens of admission to the Lord’s Supper. After the congregation had retired, he perceived a young woman at the lower end of an aisle reclining on a pew in a pensive attitude. As he approached her she said, “ Sir, I am afraid I have done wrong?” Why what have you done? “ I went up with the communicants, and received a token, but am not a member of your church; and I could not be at rest till I spoke to you about it.” To what church do you belong? “ To the Dutch church: and, if you wish it, I can satisfy you of my character and standing there.” But what made you come for a token without mentioning the matter before? “ I had not an opportunity, as I did not know in time that your communion was to be (the) next Lord’s Day. I am sorry if I have done wrong; but I expect to leave the city on Tuesday, and to be absent, I cannot tell how long, in a part of the country where I shall have no opportunity of communing; and I wished once more before I went away, to join with Christians in showing forth my Saviour’s death.” He consulted a moment with the church-officers, who were still present, and it was thought most expedient not to grant her request. He communicated this answer as gently as possible to the modest petitioner. She said not another word; but with one hand giving back the token, and with the other putting up her kerchief to her eyes, she turned away struggling with her anguish, and the

tears streaming down her cheeks. How did his heart smite him! He went home, exclaiming to himself—‘ Can this be right?—Is it possible that such is the law of the Redeemer’s house?’ It quickened his inquiries, his inquiries strengthened his doubts, and have terminated in the conviction, that it was altogether wrong.”*

4. Exclusive communion is the parent of schism; and however slightly we may think of it, the New Testament speaks of this as a great evil. Believers are members of Christ—exclusive communion rends these members from each other; tears the body of Christ limb from limb; the eye says to the hand, or the hand to the eye—“ Begone, I have no need of thee!”

Some persons, indeed, contend, that a union of opinion on as many points as possible, and especially on this, conduces to the peace of the Church. A cutting off the arms and legs of the Church may prevent them from injuring the trunk; but it leaves a mutilated trunk only. It is by such means, that certain congregations have refined, one point after another, till they have been reduced to the compass of a pew; and their faith to the belief of their own infallibility.

The fact, however, deserves to be enquired into, whether there is actually more peace and harmony in Churches which maintain strict communion, than in others which admit of free or mixed communion. My personal knowledge on this subject is, I confess, very contracted. So far as I have been able to learn, experience is in favour of the latter. But to name Churches on the one side and

* Mason’s Catholic Comm. note, p. xviii.

the other, and to place them in opposition to each other, would not be the way to promote Christian charity; and would lead to personalities which it is my study to avoid.

5. Our reasoning, on this point, must be carried still farther. The principle of exclusive communion is the ground of all the persecutions that have arisen in the Christian Church. What was the source of the controversy between the Arians and Athanasians?—between the Papists and the Protestants?—between the High-church party and the Nonconformists? In all these, and in many other cases, it has arisen from the mistaken notion, that all the members of the same Church must be of one opinion—a position that never can be consistently maintained by a Church that is not infallible; nor found in practice among any but those who believe as the Church believes, without troubling themselves to enquire what that may be. In fact, no two *thinking* men can, in *all* points, be of the same opinion. The agreement of Christians is only to be expected, as already stated, in those first principles in which the Scriptures are particularly clear; and which, by the Spirit's teaching, are engrafted into every renewed heart.

Far be it from me, however, to charge our Baptist brethren, as such, with the spirit of persecution. Some of them have had the honour to rank among the first and ablest advocates of religious liberty; and if any of them practice persecution, I am sure it must be an act of great self-denial. Still, however, the exclusive principle is the principle of persecution;—and what is persecution but the infliction of punishment without a crime?

I know it may be said, that it is no punishment to exclude a Christian brother from a particular Church; and so it is contended by members of the Establishment, that it is no punishment to exclude Dissenters from corporate bodies. But many of our Baptist friends will not admit this; and, sure I am, that to some good Christians it is a much greater punishment to be excluded from a Church, where the ministry is acceptable and profitable, and especially where there is no other congregation within their reach, than it would be to be excluded from the Common Council, or even the court of Aldermen. And it is highly inconsistent, in Dissenters, to exclude their fellow-Christians from communion, for a difference in ritual observances, when they themselves complain of being excluded, or, at least, of their forefathers (the Nonconformists) being excluded, on the like ground, from communion in the Established Church.

6. There is a farther evil arising out of this exclusive system. It is in many cases a cause of division, not only in churches, but also in Christian families; and separates those "whom God hath joined together," both in the bonds of matrimonial union and of the Christian faith; and this by means of that very gospel, which was designed to unite them all into one body under Christ their head.

It is true, indeed, that the Gospel has often been the means of dividing families, through the opposition which some of their members have raised against it: but this divine dispensation is in itself "the Gospel of peace;" and is made the instru-

ment of contention only through the natural depravity of the human heart ; whereas, in the other case, division and separation arise out of the terms of the Gospel, as understood by strict communionists. It is hardly necessary to point out how much this is in opposition to our Saviour's prayer in the garden, immediately after the institution of the Holy Supper. " Neither pray I for these alone, (namely, his then disciples,) but for them also which shall believe on me through their word ; that they *all* may be *one* ; as thou Father art in me, and I in thee, that they may be *one* in us ; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me."*

7. Not only is strict communion calculated to divide families and churches ; but it, in fact, *un-churches* all the Christian Societies in the world, except those within the small circle of one communion. It also supersedes the last dying command of the Redeemer, to commemorate his sufferings and love. For if Pædobaptists are not proper subjects to receive the Lord's Supper *with* their Baptist brethren, neither are they *without* them ; and they have no alternative, but either to live in the total neglect of that institution, or to conform to another ordinance, the which they consider has been, in *their* case, already complied with ; and the repetition of which would not only be inconsistent, but a violation of principle which no conscientious Baptist could advise. It is true that some of this denomination may find it very difficult to believe that Pædobaptists act upon deliberate conviction. We are all too apt to suppose that our opponents are influenced by the prejudices of education, for-

* John xvii. 20, 21.

getting that we ourselves are subject to the like infirmities. And though it is granted, that the names of fallible men do not weigh a feather in point of evidence, yet those of Calvin and Luther, Usher and Hooker, Owen and Baxter, Watts and Doddridge, (to name no more,) do surely prove, that it is possible for persons to *examine* the question with the greatest abilities, and the best dispositions, and yet remain Pædobaptists.*

8. Exclusive communion presents serious impediments to the universal propagation of the Gospel, and to the establishment of Christ's millennial kingdom in the earth. Many of the promises of the latter-day glory, are connected with the principle of Christian union and communion.—“In that day there shall be ONE Lord, and his name ONE.” † So another Prophet—“I will set up ONE Shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David:” ‡ meaning the Messiah, who was both David's son and lord. And when this “good Shepherd” came in the flesh, Himself says, speaking to his disciples—“Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be ONE fold and ONE shepherd.” § John also, the beloved disciple, tells us, that it was the office of this good Shepherd to “gather together in ONE the children of God that were scattered abroad.” || And to advert again to our Lord's last hours, praying for their union with

* The author well remembers once hearing a very amiable and pious Baptist minister say, in preaching on adult baptism—“Don't tell me you can't see—you *won't* see.” This is mentioned not by way of reproach, but caution.

† Zech. xiv. 9.

‡ Ezek. xxxiv. 23.

§ John x. 18.

|| John xi. 52.

each other and with himself, that they “all” might be “ONE,” he adds, as the great argument to enforce that request, “that the world may believe that thou hast sent me:”* strongly implying that nothing would go so far, as a mean or motive, in the conversion of the world, as the union of Christ’s disciples in him and with each other. “By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.”†

Now, nothing is more certain in point of fact, than that the differences among Christians, wherever they are known, form a great objection to the spread of the Gospel, both at home and abroad—those differences I mean which divide them into sects and parties, and produce angry controversies between them. And though I have the highest esteem and veneration for the Baptist Missionaries in India, and rank them with the greatest and best of mankind, I cannot but feel some alarm for the consequences of the fact being known to the heathen world, that they form a separate *caste* from their fellow Christians. To see Missionaries of equal zeal and piety, who have forsaken all to follow Christ, and traversed so many thousand miles to labour in the same cause, yet not daring to communicate with each other in the most sacred ordinances of religion, is indeed an anomaly most singular and unexampled.

In propagating the Gospel in Catholic countries, as in Ireland, and on the continent, the Jesuits, who have often urged this objection against the Protestants, will certainly not fail to avail them-

* John xvii. 21. † John xiii. 35.

selves of the same objection.* The strong hold of Popery is its union under a living head; and though *we* know that the objection is founded in ignorance, among the multitude it cannot fail to have great influence.

The Scriptures teach us to look forward to a state of the church, exceedingly more glorious than we have yet seen, namely, the *Millenium*, which Christians, after long disputing about it, are now more wisely exerting themselves to forward. In that period, I believe, it has been generally supposed that Christians will be all of one mind; and a very wise and good man, (repeatedly quoted in these pages,) some few years ago, assured me they *will all be Baptists*. Of this, however, I am not quite certain; I am more inclined to think, that while we inhabit this sublunary world, there will always be differences of opinion among Christians, sufficient to exercise the graces of forbearance, love, and candour; and, I conceive that, thereby God will be far more glorified, than by any unanimity of sentiment on minor questions.

The opinion above referred to, has, I believe, been drawn from an expression of the prophet Isaiah:—“Thy watchmen . . . shall see eye to eye, when the Lord shall bring again Zion;” that is, according to the Chaldee, “when he shall bring back his presence to Zion.”† Now the phrase of seeing “eye to eye” has been generally

* The author had this argument once urged upon him in conversation, with great earnestness, by a person educated among the Jesuits, and who, afterwards, went abroad as a Catholic Missionary.

† Isa. lii. 8. See Bp. Lowth's and the Assembly's Ann. in loc.

explained of seeing things clearly, and without obscurity; but this the Hebrews would express by seeing “face to face,” without a veil.* The expression “eye to eye,” appears to me, an allusion to the office of watchmen, placed upon the walls, looking out for a messenger, or courier, bringing good tidings; and then looking toward each other, and calling, or making signals, to intimate the circumstance.† The figure, therefore, expresses, not coincidence of opinion, but activity and zeal; and if explained in reference to the approach of the Messiah’s kingdom, (as I think it should be,) it may express Missionary zeal, and a readiness to co-operate in spreading the glad tidings of salvation through the world. Now, among Missionaries, it appears to me, that minor differences of opinion, relative to baptism, church government, &c. are of very little consequence when they do not create a schism in church communion.

I am well aware, that these differences of opinion disturb the peace of the church; but it is only by laying undue stress upon them. While Baptists and Pædobaptists, Independents and Presbyterians, are considered as equally entitled to a place at the Lord’s table, there is no ground of contention; but, on the contrary, peace, eternal peace, is there cemented by the blood of the cross.

* See 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

† In the walls of some ancient cities, if I mistake not, pipes have been found from one watch-tower to another, through which the watchmen might see each other, literally “eye to eye;” and, either by signals, or by the voice, convey intelligence without the knowledge of a besieging enemy.

SECTION VII.

Objections answered.—Conclusion.

HAVING offered, as briefly as possible, the arguments on which my own opinion rests, it might be thought disrespectful to conclude, without enquiring into some of the principal objections which may be urged against it. Those founded on certain passages of Scripture have been already considered; but there are two or three others, of a general nature, that should not be passed in total silence.

In the first place, it may be said, that mixed communion is by no means necessary, as there are Pædobaptist churches. It is difficult, however, (as already observed,) for a strict Baptist to allow those to be Christian churches in which the sacraments are not duly administered. But waving this answer, there are many cases to which it will not apply, and where there is no evangelical Pædobaptist congregation: and even where there is one, is it no serious inconvenience for a person to be driven from the ministry that may, perhaps, have been made instrumental to his conversion, to seek that of a stranger? It is not the part of a good shepherd to drive his flock to strange pastures.

2. It may be said—‘If Pædobaptists be admitted, where shall we then stop?’—Where the Bible stops. When we receive *all*, who, in a principle of Christian charity we think “God has received,” we are required to go no farther. ‘But

may not some apply who consider baptism altogether as a temporary institution, and superseded by the baptism of the Spirit?*

Perhaps, there may; and if Christ has baptized them, and received them into his church, what evil can arise from receiving them into yours? ‘But suppose, like the Society of Friends, they form the same opinion as to the Lord’s Supper?’ Then, certainly, they will not apply for admission to it; and so you need not be alarmed.

3. ‘But would it not prevent many from submitting to adult baptism, if they could be admitted without so doing?’ Perhaps—probably—it might; but our Baptist friends know best as to this fact.

‘And would this injure the *Baptist* cause?—Perhaps it might; and perish every cause that interferes with the cause of Christ! My opinion is, that free communion, among Christians, would put an end to many controversies; and, as Mr. *Fuller* once devoutly wished, lead “all the armies of the Lamb to concentrate their forces against the common enemy.”†

Here I should close, having said more than I intended; but, in examining this question, I have found one circumstance of a most appalling nature. By the fundamental principle of congregational churches, every question relative to church government, or discipline, is decided by a majority; the Minister himself usually being Moderator.

* Thoughts on Baptism, by *Agnostos*.

† See motto in our title page.

The Baptist churches are all founded on this principle; and all questions among them are thus determined—*save and except only*, the question of mixed communion. In that case, the advocates of exclusive communion insist, that no alteration can be made while *one* of their sentiment remains. Thus, as Mr. Hall observes—“while the present plan is pursued, while we are waiting for the *last sands of intolerance* to run out, the dominion of error and injustice may be prolonged to an intolerable period; since, of all creatures, *Bigotry* is the most tenacious of life.”*

These are not *my* words. I would attribute this tenacious principle to any thing rather than to Bigotry; but I cannot apologize for a principle so inconsistent in itself, and so injurious in its effects. And this conduct appears to me the more glaringly absurd, where the Minister himself happens to be on the liberal side of the question, and would gladly administer the ordinance of the Lord’s Supper to his Pædobaptist friends, as well as others, *if he dared*. In such cases, however, and especially where the majority of the church are for free communion, it might be well for him to put the question to himself—“How dare I to refuse them?”

The plan of Mr. *Robert Hall* appears to me so just, as well as liberal, that I am surprised any friend to religious liberty should object to it. He administers the ordinance in question, (as I am informed,) first to the strict Baptists in his church, and afterwards to the Pædobaptists, and such friends to free communion as choose to partake

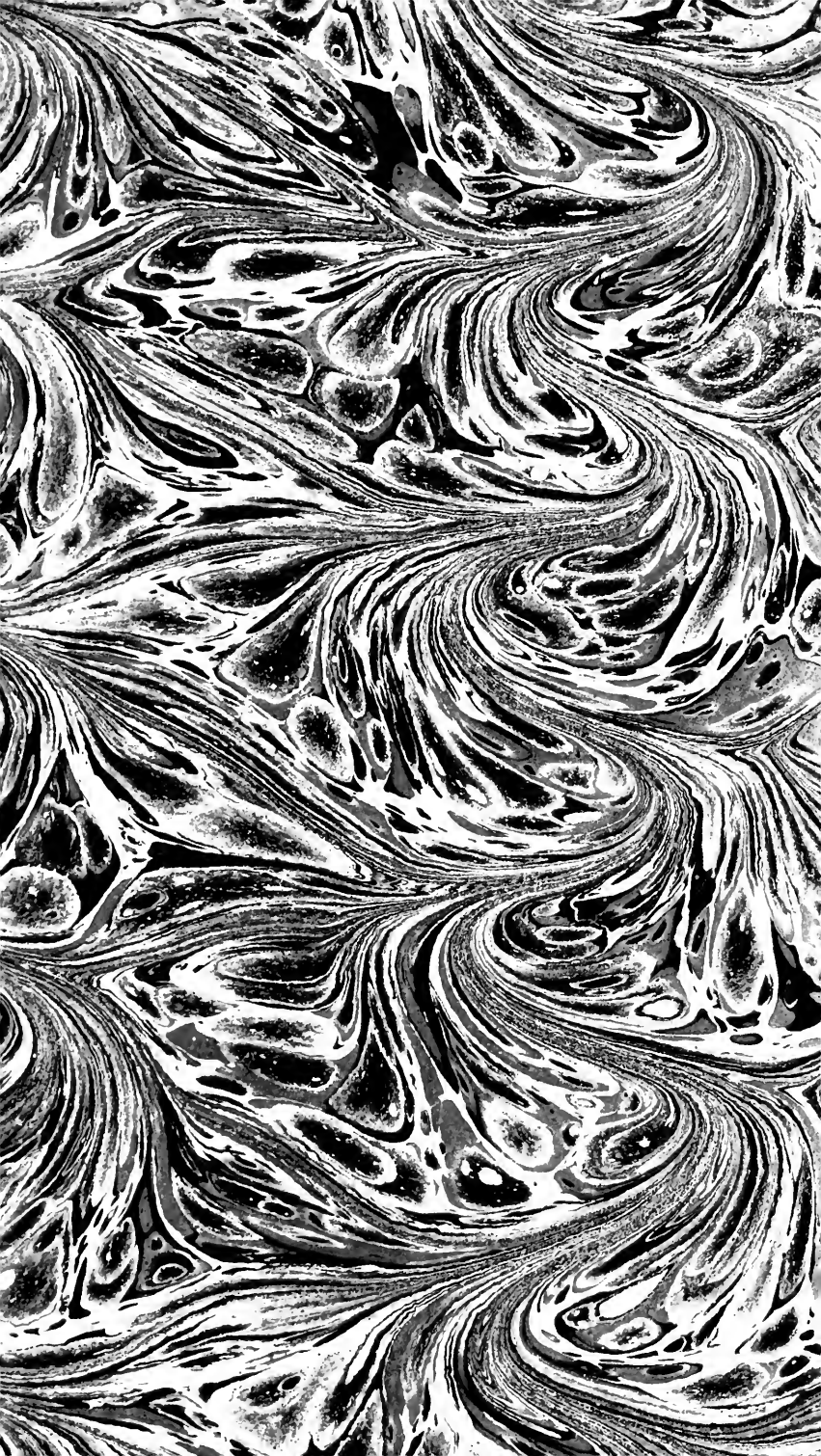
* Hall’s Reply to Kinghorn, pref. p. xix.

with them. Thus the laws of Christian love and liberty are maintained; the most tender consciences are not wounded, by sitting at table with their less enlightened brethren; and the Lord of the feast is pleased to give his presence to both: for he hath said—"Wherever two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."*

It is not, however, for me to dictate. In proportion as Christians associate and co-operate in Christ's great cause, their hearts will be enlarged toward each other; sectarian peculiarities will die away, and they will find it impossible to banish from their communion, those whom they have received into their hearts. May it please the great Head of the church to pour down such an effusion of the Holy Spirit, as may bear down all our prejudices, and open the doors of every Christian church (like the heart of the Saviour) to receive all who come, by faith and penitence, to request admission!

* Matt. xxviii. 20.

THE END.



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